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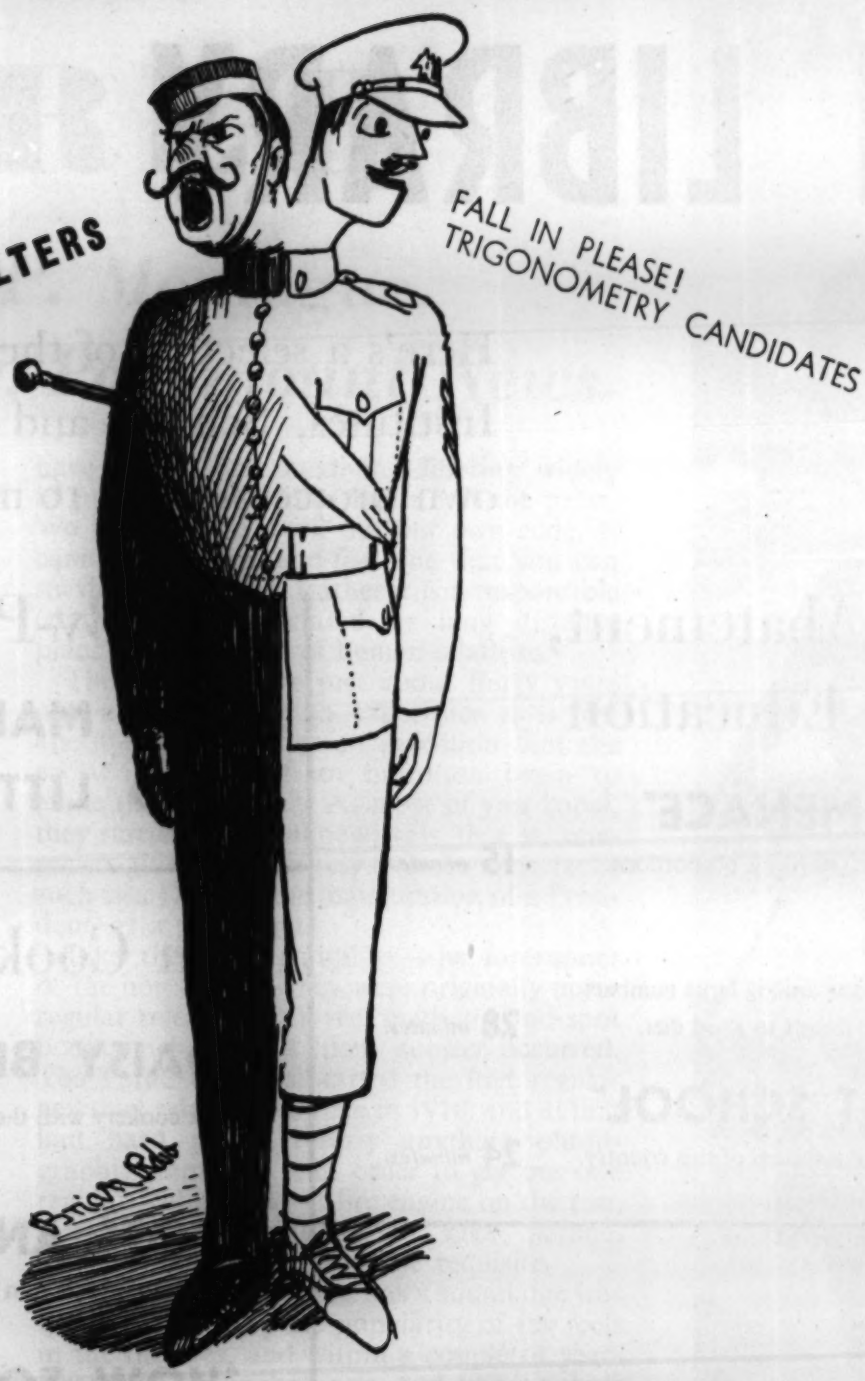

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"PARTY DISH"
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EYES on the WORLD

by William P. Montague, Assignment Editor, Paramount News.

THE question most frequently asked me when someone discovers that I am in the newsreel business is, "Why are the newsreels so uninteresting? Why do they run so many battleships and bathing beauties and baseball pictures and baby parades?" The answer is that we do our best to find pictures of greater interest to our theatre audiences than these, but we have also learned that these trite pictures do have a sure-fire interest value.

I have a budget of $20,000 a week to spend in making newsreel pictures. I have cameramen in every country of the world sitting up nights watching for interesting things to photograph. They will risk their lives to get a picture; in fact, they have done so more than once. I remember the greatest newsreel picture ever made. A cameraman was on the Lusitania after it was torpedoed. Survivors told how he rushed here and there, getting the women and children being loaded into the life-boats. He got the stokers pouring out from below decks. He climbed on to the bridge and got the Captain standing by the controls. He got the ship as she tilted over further and further. And then the Lusitania sank—and the cameraman forgot to jump. That was one picture that was never shown, and another cameraman who got carried away by his story.

The press, with its written account, cannot duplicate the talking picture, certainly the radio cannot. One of the greatest newsreel pictures of all times was that of an eight-year-old New Jersey youngster who had rescued his two little brothers from a burning house, and was sitting there on the ruins sobbing over the remnants of his bicycle. He explained quite intimately into the camera that it had been burned while he was saving his brothers, that it was what he valued most—and how was he to earn enough money to get another? It just *got* them in the theatres; it even *got* three different bicycle manufacturers who all sent the child new bicycles.

But, as I say, along with this flower of intimacy there are limitations—the limitations of the workings of a motion picture camera and of a news organisation trying to use it to catch its news on the fly. We have had to work out our own rules for handling and editing what news pictures we get. We have here a new medium, differing widely in many respects from radio and the press. We have had to work out our own code. It cannot be a hard-and-fast one that you can set down on paper. Rather it is a responsible editorial policy dictated by long distance planning in the field of human relations.

The newsreels are just about thirty years old, and according to experience it is just about that time after an invention that the social influences of an invention begin to make themselves felt. As most of you know, they started as actual newsreels, that is, one-reelers given over entirely to a news spectacle, such as a Durbar, the inauguration of a President, or a prize-fight.

Like the news pamphlet—the forerunner of the newspaper—they were originally not a regular release, but a reel made up and spot booked whenever a likely subject occurred. The Pathé brothers started the first regular newsreel release over here in 1910, and at first had hard going. Nearly anything photographic went into it in order to get out one regular reel a week—a fire engine on the run, a cornerstone-laying or an Elks' parade. Cheap footage was the prime requisite.

That the newsreel idea was a sound one was quickly proved by the popularity of the reels in the theatres, and within a couple of years Hearst had launched one, and two or three other companies foundered in and out of the field. The war came along and forced the consolidation of the reels into one reel, run more or less from Washington for purposes of national defence and propaganda; but immediately after the Armistice they were separated and by 1927 there were six newsreels—Pathé, Fox, Universal, Kinograms, Hearst and Paramount.

THE modern newsreel is generally divided into two major departments—assignment and make-up. The assignment department makes the pictures; the make-up department edits them for the screen.

An assignment editor has a set-up much like that of a newspaper. He has assistants who correspond roughly to the cable editors, wire editors and city editors, each watching a particular territory for news stories and assigning the cameramen in his province.

Most of the newsreels have working arrangements with one or another of the big news agencies, Associated Press, United Press or International News. A flash or an earthquake in India comes through. The cable editor sends a cable, moves a pin on a big map of the men around the world, and perhaps a cameraman climbs out of bed in Vienna and rushes off a thousand miles by plane for the disaster.

Once the film reaches New York, the make-up department takes it over. Dozens of stories arrive daily. The make-up editor and his assistants spend nearly the entire day in the showrooms, screening the material. What is considered the best is immediately selected for release in the newsreel. One man takes the negative and cuts it into a story. Another goes outside to his typewriter and writes the titles and off-stage lines for it. The film passes up to the synchronizing department. Here thousands of feet of original sound are catalogued and filed. Here you can find eight varieties of women's screams, one or a thousand Javanese talking, a hen cackling or a tri-motored plane with one motor missing. Where the original sound on the negative is good or where a speech has been recorded it is preserved. Where the original sound does not complement the story it is wiped out and new sound from the library added to replace it or augment the original.

At the same time, the off-stage voice commentator adds his lines, and his words carefully counted to synchronise with the action on the screen. Musical underlay is added if it will increase the effectiveness of the picture.

The whole is mixed in the right proportions by the monitor man and out comes a newsreel sound track. Working at really top speed, with practically a belt conveyor system, the process takes around six hours.

Once the finished negative is made, it is given to the laboratory for printing. Here is the really big time lag of newsreels over newspapers. With the highest speed printing equipment that it has been possible to devise, it takes a newsreel twenty-four hours to print its edition. A newsreel makes three to five hundred prints of each edition, or around a thousand prints a week. This compares with a hundred prints made of a feature picture. As each newsreel print is a thousand feet long it is easy to see that each newsreel company is turning out around a million feet of film a week. That is a lot of footage. The five newsreels go to about 16,000 theatres a week. They are seen by approximately eighty million people a week—and that is in this country alone.

Most of the American newsreels own or are associated with newsreels in England, on the Continent, South America, Africa, Australia and Japan. The material is shipped from this country on every boat leaving here. In Europe the offstage voice is added in the language of the country in which it is to be distributed. These foreign newsreels in turn are continually sending the films made abroad to this country. It is a tremendous world-wide news coverage and distribution, mainly controlled by the American reels. An American made newsreel picture may easily have a distribution double that of America alone, and will probably far outrun the distribution of the average feature picture.

The early newsreels went in for any pictures that could be grabbed on the run. For instance, the obvious pictorial matter, such as bathing beauties, battleships, baby shows, cornerstone layings, and marching troops. Unfortunately, they are still forced to turn to a certain amount of such material. The early producers discovered, however, when there wasn't any pictorial news, it was possible to create it. Pathé on its second issue was approached by a man who wanted to jump off a roof with a parachute. And while the jump was not a success, the picture was exciting. It looked like news—and that inaugurated the stunt period era.

Back in those days we used to make one or two stunt pictures a week. Why we didn't liquidate the entire breed of stunt men and get sued out of business by a suffering world, I don't know. In those days we used to roller skate along building ledges, slide across Broadway on tight ropes, ride over cliffs on motor-cycles, crash planes, land blimps on roofs, railroad trains, boats, lay smoke screens around anything and everything and go to any extremes that might prove exciting.

Wars were also exciting things that we pursued avidly. One enterprising Chicago firm is supposed to have paid Pancho Villa

PANCHO VILLA

Cameraman secured this picture of Peons' idol by trick . . .

$30,000 for the exclusive picture rights of his revolution. This firm is said to have insisted that his battles be fought to suit the photographic light and camera locations. Ever since we have chased wars, not entirely from a news point of view, but also from a pictorial one. As a result the tradition of the demon cameraman was built up—the Richard Harding Davis type who followed the wars around the world with leather puttees, reversed cap and a camera.

DURING these experimental years the tradition of tremendous rivalry between newsreels was built up. Back in those days no amount of money was too great to spend in reaching Broadway first with nearly any news picture. Planes, not one but two, three or four, would be used to insure getting the picture through. Special trains would be hired when the planes could not fly.

Do you remember back in 1928 when the German plane Bremen came down on Greenly Island off Labrador, after the first east to west trans-Atlantic flight? The newsreels spent as high as $20,000 for a few hours beat on Broadway with the story. One enterprising cameraman bought over $1,000 worth of gasoline as he flew down the Canadian coast, burning it as he purchased it so that his competitors could not get any and so refuel their planes and follow him through to Greenly Island.

ANYTHING SENSATIONAL

Went after the Klu Klux Klan . . .

Around the time of the depression, and President Roosevelt's first term, the newsreels started going broke. They discovered that while spending all this money was very exciting and lots of fun, at the same time the people in the theatres did not really care whether they saw the news picture in the theatre on Monday or Friday. They had already read about it in the newspapers and heard about it over the radio several days before.

The newsreels then started a period of experimenting. Some went on the idea that the people were poor and wanted dollar and cents news. We tried everything—learned studies by college professors, with animated diagrams as to why stocks went down and food prices up. We got long-winded comment from the man in the street who was not an authority but at the same time had a human intimacy. We studied the newspapers and picked up some of their crusades, going after the Klu Klux Klan, patent medicine manufacturers, prison labour—anything that was sensational.

Here is the problem the newsreels are faced with. They have the prerogatives of a news agency and hence the social obligations of a news disseminating organisation. At the same time, their audience will only accept their product if it is entertaining—good theatre. We are driven into the corner of having to combine the two factors, and our policy, as worked out roughly, has become, "Give as much real news as can really be interestingly told with motion pictures."

Actually, when we got right down to work and examined the problem, we found tremendous possibilities. We found that nearly any major problem in human relations has an angle of popular interest. Perhaps our coverage is a superficial one; perhaps we approach important social news from an entertainment rather than an educational one. But at least we tackle it, get it into the theatres and before the eyes of twenty-eight million people every week.

An obligation rests with the newsreels if they are to consider themselves a news medium. That is to edit the news, and to edit it with a far-sighted view to its ultimate effect on human relations. If we were purely an entertainment medium, we would run

anything that was exciting, spectacular or amusing.

I remember a number of years ago when the son of a wealthy department store owner in San Jose, California, was kidnapped and murdered. A couple of suspects were arrested and put in the San Jose jail. It was a tremendous story at the time, and with the assistance of the police, we picturised the story and re-enacted the kidnapping and how the man was thrown off the bridge and shot as he fell. It was a fair enough dramatisation of the circumstances, but I guess we just weren't very good editors—we had not realised the power and intimacy of the medium with which we were working. We rushed the pictures out. They reached the theatres in San Jose in time for the morning show. That very same night a mob battered down the San Jose jail and lynched those two suspects. We got the pictures of the lynching, too, but when we saw them we realised that we had failed miserably in our responsibility as editors.

A FEW weeks ago I had a 'phone call from our Chicago cameraman. He was about to leave for Indianapolis along with the rest of the opposition cameramen to cover the big auto races. They are always a sure-fire thrill and good entertainment and, as you know, practically routine coverage for every newsreel. Our cameraman wanted to go along with the gang—it's always a swell party—but he did begrudgingly mention that he had been out at the Republic Steel plant that day and things looked tough. Well, it was quite a gamble to take, but we pulled him off those auto races and sent him back to the steel plant. And in doing so we got a rather famous riot picture. We also got complaints from a good many thousands of people, on one side or the other. Finally, the entire situation pretty well crystallised in our minds a policy of editorial obligation.

Well, we made the riot story, screened it, and immediately realised the problem on our hands. Several paths were open to us. We could have killed the story and no one would have been the wiser. Newsreel film is tricky stuff to work with. Quite a lot is often no good and if it had been reported technically defective we would have been out of the jam.

Or, again, we could have simply gone along as entirely an entertainment medium and said that we had a spectacle like the assassination of a king, or a war, and released the story, letting the theatres run it or not, depending on whether it had box-office value in that particular community.

Instead, we got socially conscious. We realised that we had to assume the obligations of a news organisation. We had to act as editors and consider the ultimate consequences of what we released. We had to remember what had happened when we released that kidnapping picture.

Extracted from a statement made by William P. Montague, Assignment Editor of Paramount News, at the Institute of Human Relations held under the auspices of the National Conference of Jews and Christians. Pictures: Page 3, *London Films; others from Paramount newsreels.*

When we saw the picture that day we were as indignant as anyone. After all, we are all people who work for a living, and I suppose most people in the newsreel business, being former newspaper people, are moderately liberal. But we also sort of grew up and realised that we had a social duty in regard to our jobs.

Consider the situation at that time. The picture we had was a good picture, but not a great one. There have been better. It was its timeliness that made it dangerous. It was at the very climax of the steel strike. Seventy thousand men were out on strike, battling non-strikers in seven states at every morning and evening shift in the plants.

We had something which, if we let it go, would have blocked any peacable settlement of the steel strike. In fact, the bitterness and indignation it would have stirred up certainly would have led to added fighting. Out in the steel states—Michigan, Indiana, Illinois—there were bound to be riots in theatres which, perhaps, might even possibly have led to more deaths.

Paramount did not suppress the Chicago riot pictures. Instead, it voluntarily turned

We got socially conscious . . .

them over to the LaFollette Senate Committee investigating the situation, to make what use it could of them in behalf of public welfare. They immediately became part of the record of the proceedings, but in a way that insured no harm to the general public.

Senator LaFollette expressed his appreciation for the stand that Paramount had taken, and finally after the film had been used as evidence, recommended the release of the pictures. By that time the industrial situation had quieted down and there was no danger of riots developing, and Paramount sent the complete and unexpurgated pictures out to every one of its exchanges.

The riot pictures more or less crystallise the problem of the newsreels—are they to be wholly an entertainment medium or are they to assume their obligations as a news medium?

Our answer, when faced with the hard facts of being a theatrical medium, is that we must combine the two. We are a new news medium. We are working out a code of ethics of our own. While we are handicapped by the necessity of always being amusing and interesting, at the same time we believe we are successfully presenting to our audiences the world over their news situations and helping them interpret these problems in terms of sound human relationships.

World Film News

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

Vol. 2 No. 11 **February 1938**

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Cover still: Wallace Beery in *Bad Man of Brimstone*

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A Rather Spiritual Young Man Returns to Comedy

Leslie Howard talks about his comic and tragic roles, and his part in the forthcoming film version of "Pygmalion"

JUST off Hollywood Boulevard is the Columbia Broadcasting Company's Theatre. It was rehearsal time and on the bare stage was an orchestra, Eddie Cantor, Deanna Durbin, Bobby Breen and a host of technicians—and Leslie Howard. Behind a glass panel to the side were the engineers with headphones clamped to their ears and their eyes fixed on a large clock which dominated the untidy stage. To the extreme left with a microphone of his own sat an effects man surrounded by window frames, door frames, coconut shells, buckets of water, bells, cups and saucers ready to simulate any scene, or to imitate any sound.

Outside the Hollywood sun was blazing and inside it was stuffy and hot. Cantor was in his shirt sleeves, Howard in flannels mopped his brow while the others sagged in odd corners. Then Cantor jumped to life, and things began to happen. Little red lights flickered, the headphones were adjusted, the effects man grabbed a bucket, and Cantor began to rehearse. For the next three hours lines were read and re-read, gags were added and taken out again, and as the cast wilted into their seats, the script was sent back to the writers again. This was repeated at intervals for several days.

Cantor's half-hour programme is due on the air at 4 p.m. on Sunday. At 12.30, he has a public rehearsal when hundreds of people flock into the theatre. The show runs through and takes about 40 minutes. Everything is done as it will be when the show goes on the air.

About 1.20 the theatre is quiet again. The half-dozen who have clocked the laughs are sitting with Cantor re-editing the script. Only the gags which got 100 per cent laughs are left in. Slowly the 40 minutes show is trimmed down to 29 minutes 40 seconds. One of Cantor's jokes is right out; Howard has three new lines; Deanna has to sing an extra chorus for some of her lines have been cut. At 4 p.m. the public streams in again and the final show goes on the air—every line a winner. It runs to within the 20 seconds time margin. At 8 o'clock the show is repeated for the West Coast. Over 20 hours rehearsal, and several re-writings of the script for a half-hour on the air.

When I tracked Leslie Howard to his new office in the West End I reminded him of the day I had watched him rehearse with Cantor.

"Yes, we certainly did work hard."

"Harder than you have to work at the B.B.C.?"

"Well, it is difficult to say that, because I have only played straight parts at the B.B.C. —Hamlet, for example—and then it was rather a matter of adaptation. We weren't really making something new, we were making something old and proved fit the limits of radio. But I rather think that the American radio people do put more into their type of show than we do into ours, for they are doing a different thing really. They are making a new type of entertainment by exploiting their medium. They are not adapting old ideas to a new form; they are creating a new idea out of the nature of their medium. They are not afraid of the studio or of the medium. They romp in and make the studio and the microphones do things—sometimes very novel and exciting things. They do not try to hide the fact that they are on the radio, but rather to make that part of the appeal.

"But it is interesting to see how formalised this new type of entertainment is becoming. This is best appreciated if you consider the audiences who come to watch these broadcasts. They have quite ceased to be astonished at the sight of an actor reading from a script, and to see the players, other than the principals, sitting in a straight line along the stage and only rising to say their lines. You will remember that practically no gestures are used, and there is absolutely no dramatic movement on the stage. The audiences have become accustomed to this. They no longer laugh at the effects man opening and shutting his windows. The actors feel this too. It is a new medium which has already conventions of its own. I think the Americans do more original work within these conventions, because they exploit the medium more, because they rehearse more, and probably harder—and because they have more money to spend. The last is perhaps the most important. They can afford the best of everybody—directors, actors, writers—all the time."

"Did you do Shakespeare on the American radio?"

"Yes, I did Benedick in *Much Ado* in Columbia's Shakespeare series, but except for the fact that the play was cut to fit the hour, the technique was pretty much as it would have been at the B.B.C. It is in the new kinds of entertainment that American radio is most significant, and they seem to do more with new material than we do here."

"And now, Mr. Howard, I'm going to ask you the question that everybody is asking you?"

"Yes, I know, you are going to ask me what made me become a comedian: you are going to ask me, have I suffered a spiritual change? Or are you going to suggest that I am now back again in the fold doing the things we all like, after letting the side down rather badly by trying to be a highbrow? One paper really did say that, you know."

"Well, my question was going to be something like that."

"It's very funny really. Everybody is talking about me 'switching' from drama to comedy. All the critics made the point. It just shows, I suppose, how short the public memory is. A few years ago I was known only as a comedian. My first stage successes were in comedies. I was playing in *Her Cardboard Lover* when I read *Berkeley Square*. I liked it very much and wanted to play it. But no one would believe I could be anything but a comedian. But we wangled it somehow, and the play, as you know, became very popular. I played it on the screen, and there followed a series of parts which transformed a one-time comedian into a rather spiritual young man. *The Petrified Forest*, *Of Human Bondage* and *Romeo and Juliet* completed the transformation and the comedian was forgotten.

"When Warner Bros. proposed another film there was not a suitable story available, at least not a drama requiring a soulful young man. I suggested a comedy, and the old situation came up the other way round. Once again I had been fitted into a nice little water-tight compartment and typed as a romantic actor. No one could imagine me as a comedian. But I liked one story particularly, so *It's Love I'm After* was made. It was, as you know, a success, so we followed on with *Stand In*. This story was originally not a comedy at all, but Warner Bros. were now quite happy in the idea that I could be a comedian, so the script was re-written and cast as a comedy. It so happened that *Stand In* reached London before *It's Love I'm After*, but actually it came into being as I have said."

"And the next venture is *Pygmalion*?"

"Yes, and this time I am going to have a hand in the direction. Anthony Asquith and I will co-direct, and I will play Professor Higgins. It is still difficult for an actor in Hollywood to take any real part in the production. Every aspect of production is so self-contained, and there is so little come and go between writers, directors, and editors, that the best they can do is to become as expert as they can in their own limited field. It is the only way they can make any impression on the finished picture. And the same is true of the actor. The only impression he can make on a film is through his acting. He can have little effect on the people who work in these other air-tight compartments. But in England production is not so rigid, and I am going to try to contribute something more than I can through just acting."

"And who else is in the cast with you?"

"There's Wendy Hiller who did such good work in the original cast of *Love on the Dole*. She will, of course, play Eliza, and Wilfred Lawson will play Alfred Dolittle. Lawson has been getting great praise for his work in *I Have Been Here Before*, and I am sure he will be grand as the dustman."

I know he will, for the first time I saw *Pygmalion* about 15 years ago—Wilfred Lawson was Alfred Dolittle. I look forward to seeing what 15 years have done to Mr. Lawson's Dolittle, what Leslie Howard will do to Professor Higgins, and what time and the cinema will have done to *Pygmalion*.

Thomas Baird.

Pictures: TOP LEFT—"*It's Love I'm After*" (*Warner Bros.*). BOTTOM LEFT—"*Berkeley Square*" (*Fox*). ABOVE—"*The Scarlet Pimpernel*" (*London Films*).

The *MOB* Still *RIDES*

by

Russell Ferguson

THE South is not what it used to be. In the course of 1937 there were about sixty necktie parties, but they only got eight Negroes altogether. In comparison with previous years, this is to be regarded as a poor score.

The trouble is, seemingly, that the militia or the National Guard or other interfering busybodies are getting the prisoner out of the jail before the mob gets in. This is very vexing. What could be more annoying than to turn out, along with a few hundred others, pleasantly lit up and raring to go, with adequate supplies of gasolene, kerosene and other combustibles, side irons and plenty of ammunition, only to discover that there is nobody to burn? When you have invited all your friends, and the sheriffs and deputies of neighbouring counties are there to see fair play and make sure the thing is done right, it is very disappointing to find that somebody has let you down and the show is off.

For think of all the things you can do to a Negro, once you feel that the law is with you, in the person of gun-toting deputies and prominent citizens. You can shoot him or hang him. This is quite good in its way, but it does not last very long, and strictly speaking it is sound practice to begin by torturing him with a blow-lamp, or cutting bits off him. There are more spectacular variations. One very good lynching, a year or two back, took the form of burning a schoolhouse, with the Negro chained on the roof. It was in the schoolhouse that he committed the crime, so the execution was not without poetic quality. Of course he was guilty.

Every person lynched is guilty. He may, of course, be innocent of the crime he is accused of, but if so he is guilty of something else. If he is a Negro, there is no need to split hairs, because the nature of the Negro is such that if he did not commit the crime, he nearly did,

All night a bright and solitary star
Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char.
Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
The ghastly body swaying in the sun:
The women thronged to look, but never a one
Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;
And little lads, lynchers that were to be,
Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.
CLAUDE McKAY.

THEY WON'T FORGET . . .

outstanding general release film of the month, pictures the prejudice, hatred and fear that fosters lynchings.

or at least he might have, and in any case he was just about to commit another crime which was even worse. In all doubtful cases, the execution settles the matter for good and all, because when once the man is dead, the great principle can be quoted that he must have been guilty or he would not have been lynched.

In the maintenance of justice on these lines, the people of the South have a great record to keep up. Over and over again they have done the right thing, when the law has shilly-shallied, or even acquitted the prisoner. In many instances, prompt action has prevented the possibility of a re-trial, with its attendant danger of acquittal. Many times, too, convictions have been secured by packing the courthouse with Klansmen and forcing the judge at the pistol point to give the proper verdict and sentence.

Again, it is easy to show that lynching parties have prevented many more crimes than they have punished. When a party is looking for a murderer, it frequently disposes of one or two suspicious Negro characters on the way. This means, of course, that these Negroes will not commit crimes any more. They may, or may not, have done anything wrong before their execution, but one thing is certain, they will do nothing wrong after it. On purely logical grounds, it is quite clear that the only sure way of preventing a man from committing an offence is to kill him before he gets the chance.

There are no words to describe the horrible crimes which have been prevented in this way. Think of it. About five thousand people, mainly Negroes, have been lynched in America since they started keeping the score. Each one of them was a criminal (or he would not have been lynched) and might have gone on for years and years, committing heaven knows what, had he been suffered to live. Reflecting

on this, we realise the great service rendered to American society by the grand old lynching tradition.

LYNCHING serves society, also, in more indirect ways. Many of the crimes for which men have been lynched are such as the courts would punish with a very light sentence, if indeed they punished at all. Such crimes, for instance, as passing for white, looking in at bedroom windows, self-defence, resisting arrest, writing insulting letters, arguing about motor-cars, or asking for payment of accounts. These offences should not be dismissed with light sentences, for the whole question of racial relations is at stake. Negroes must be kept in their place, or they will form trade-unions, co-operative societies, and other dangerous bodies. They are especially difficult to keep down when they have become prosperous and bought property which they refuse to sell below market prices.

This was their condition some years ago in an Oklahoma town, in which an incident took place which taught them a lesson they will not readily forget. The citizens were desirous of lynching a Negro boy, and a small party of Negroes so far forgot their place as to offer to help the sheriff to defend his prisoner. The sheriff very properly refused, and as the Negroes left his office they found themselves confronted by a few hundred citizens. The Negroes at once made a violent attack on the crowd, and then ran away to their own quarter of the town. Five thousand citizens, armed with machine-guns, revolvers, kerosene, gasolene, shot-guns and aircraft surrounded the Negro quarter on all sides, and a Negro riot commenced. Led by ex-officers of the American army, the citizens fought all night against the vicious Negroes, and destroyed forty-four blocks of Negro property. This is the kind of thing that happens when Negroes get out of hand.

And now all this is passing. It is a great loss, for, in a real sense, lynchings are social festivals which provide outings for all members of the family. In many parts, lynching bees are the only major excitement that poor communities enjoy. Women like them, children love them, and there are many thousands of women and children who have never had the opportunity of setting a courthouse on fire or throwing bottles at the militia. If the South continues to degenerate, they never will.

AND yet, even to-day, many incidents occur which show that the manly spirit of the South is not yet dead. All is not lost. From time to time, strikers and labour organisers are tarred and feathered, communists are flogged, miners' houses are burned down.

It is evident that the spirit of the mob is still there. In the old days, they used to kill their man. Nowadays, more frequently, they only half-kill him and then he dies. If he is a labour leader or a communist, he must have known perfectly well what he would get, and thus it is practically suicide.

So these incidents are not lynchings, in the old sense. It is difficult to know what to call them. A recent report says that "the proper classification of these cases is under consideration." The final judgment will be interesting, and may have an important bearing upon the score for 1938.

Above : Planters, armed with sticks and whips, mounting cars to pursue and terrorise striking share croppers

Left : Planters seizing clergyman to flog him. (Stills from "The March of Time")

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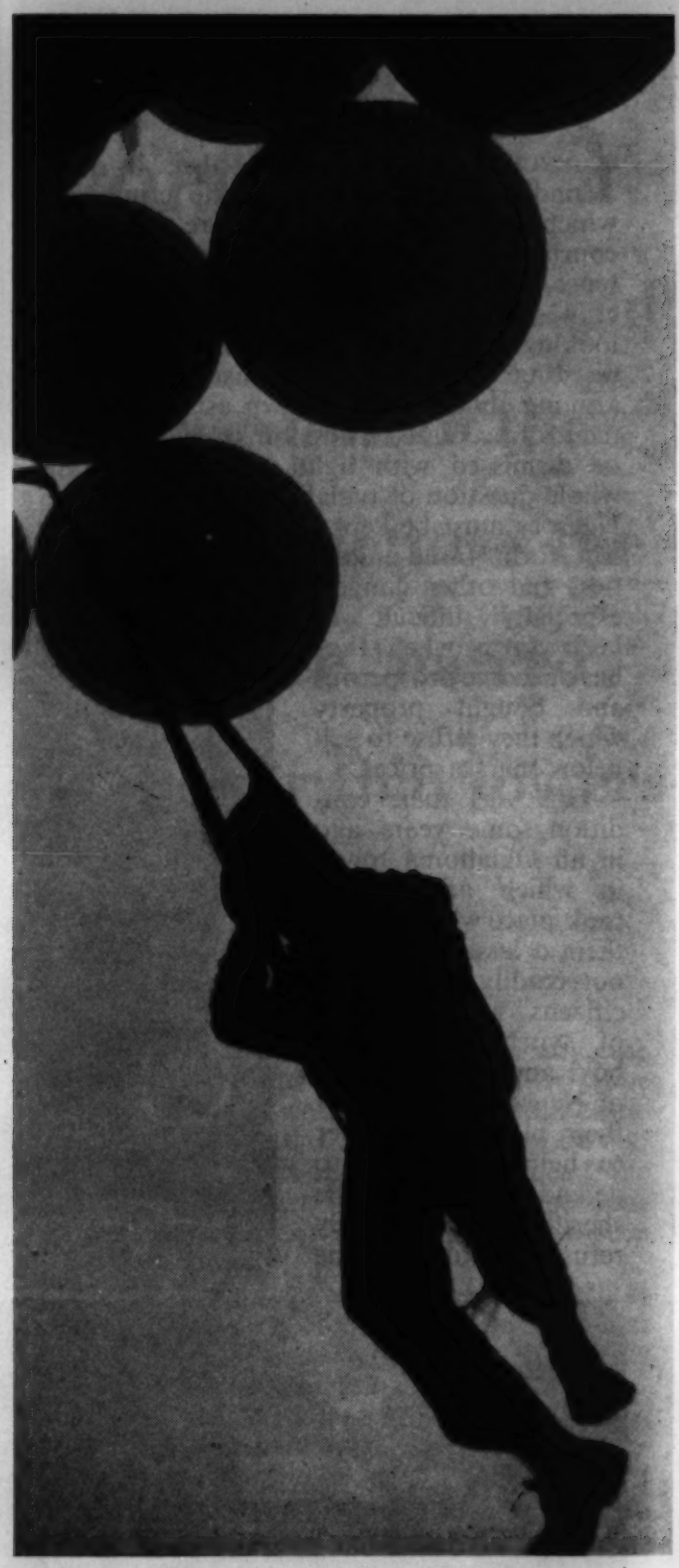
HOWDY DEATH!

Glad to meet you

GLEN NORRIS commentates on some exciting adventures in which well-known cameramen have faced death in search of newsreel pictures.



WE'RE on the golf course at Old Orchard Beach, in the U.S. State of Maine. Outside the clubhouse a small crowd is looking up at something that's very much like an enormous cluster of grapes. Actually 30 small hydrogen-filled balloons bobbing and tugging at their lines in a sharpish breeze. Where the lines come down to earth, they're attached to a parachute harness which at the moment is being adjusted round Paramount newsreel cameraman Al Mingalone. In his 33 years, tall, weather beaten Mingalone has taken many a risk for a screen news story; lashed to a submarine's periscope while the "sub" was below the surface—all except the periscope; from the top of "Endeavour's" mast—170 feet above the deck—while the yacht was heeling from side to side; and on the carrier of a motor-cycle acrobat doing his "act" on the Wall of Death.

* * *

Compared to those, to-day's stunt doesn't promise so much of a thrill. Al has discovered that you can buy 30 small balloons for £10 . . . that makes this just about the cheapest way of individual flying. The balloons almost exactly balance his weight . . . so when he takes a jump he goes up, up and over the trees . . . and when it comes to taking a picture in a crowd, that sort of jump is mighty useful! But what if the wind catches him and carries him up? Oh! That's O.K. . . . one end of a 200 ft. cord is tied round Al's waist . . . and his friend, Catholic priest Father James Mullen, is holding the other end.

They're all set. He takes a run . . . and . . . the wind whips him up like a rocket . . . a hundred feet . . . a hundred and fifty . . . nearly two hundred . . . the cord is pulling tight . . . Father Mullen has tied it to his car as anchorage . . . here comes the jerk . . . its broken!!! One of the club caddies jumps for the trailing end of the line . . . but as he grabs it he stumbles and misses. Father Mullen is dashing off to his nearby house for his rifle . . . the Father is a crack shot, and if he can pot a couple of those balloons it may save Mingalone from a visit to the stratosphere. Everyone is shouting and rushing about . . . there's just one man keeping calm, and that's Mingalone . . . he's got his camera focussed, and he's grinding out a picture of all the people trying to save him! But by the time the Father comes back with his gun, Al is just a speck against a dark rain cloud . . . and now he's gone . . . right into the clouds at 2,500 feet . . . and here comes the rain . . . will he get wet!

We're in Father Mullen's car, heading East . . . that's the way Mingalone was going . . . hey! look out, Father! keep your eye on the road! leave the sky-watching to us . . . no sign of him yet. But what's that just beyond those trees . . . step on it, Father . . . yes, it's Mingalone . . . the rain must have soaked his clothes and increased his weight . . . now he's skimming along at 600 feet. We get ahead of him . . . Father Mullen leaps from the car, and up goes his rifle . . . missed. Two balloons at the second shot . . . it's all over . . . Al is coming down. But now he's taking a hand

himself . . . with his pocket knife between his teeth he's trying to climb up to a ring five feet above his head to cut loose some more balloons . . . the way he's struggling, he must be frozen stiff . . . he's getting tangled in the trailing anchor line . . . he's dropped his camera . . . now he's 12 lbs. lighter, and before the Father can take another shot . . . he's up and off again.

Back into the car . . . dodging the traffic in a tough race with the wind driven balloons . . . and every light seems to be at red. Some drivers are calling out that the wind is shifting . . . and that he's heading towards the sea. It's fifteen miles of hooting and crashing gears before a scared Father Mullen catches up with the bobbing balloonist, now only 200 feet up. Again the Father jumps from the car, again he shoots . . . and that's all that's needed to bring the exhausted, dripping, shivering Mingalone back to earth.

But what does the top end of the adventure think about it? Here he is a few hours later at the microphone of station WABC: "Well, I guess I've had more thrills than the man on the flying trapeze. When I was up the mast of the 'Endeavour' I knew that one slip News. As the great ship's long lines are dropped . . . Deeke swings down to the ground crew . . . and then . . .

Just an hour later, a sweaty, sooty Deeke tells his own story: "The big ship was floating within my view-finder, and everything seemed right as the spring evening could make it. And then . . . the explosion. At that very moment, the motor of my camera went dead. I clutched frantically at the crank handle and turned the whole scene by hand.

"The horror was so terrific that my hand and my whole body shook violently. I expect you will be able to see the shake in the pictures. The dramatic impact of the disaster was so swift, so stunning, that I had no time to feel either compassion or fear. Not until afterwards.

"But thirty seconds of the twilight of May 6th are scorched into my memory for ever."

JAPAN'S army is making its final assault on China's capital, Nanking . . . bombs crash . . . shells whine . . . machine guns splutter . . . rifles ping . . . death drives across the city in a sweeping wave. All British and American two Alleys are climbing up the side of the U.S.S. "Panay". . . .

In London, at the G.B. office, a cable arrives from Paul Alley. . . .

The Sinking Panay . . . 450 tons of International Incident (G.B. News)

would fling me into the Atlantic. When I was in the Cuban revolt I thought the mob would beat me. When I was tied to that submarine periscope I thought I might have to cut loose and swim for it. But I never thought before that my last hour had come. That was the way this time, and maybe you'll get some of it when you see the pictures I took up there. I guess if I was smart I'd quit this game; but this 'anywhere for a newstory' kind'a life gets in your blood."

WE are at the great American naval air base, at Lakehurst, New Jersey. . . . It is the twilight of a May evening. . . . The great silver envelope of the Hindenburg roars slowly down over the landing field. . . . Newsreel cameramen make final adjustments . . . focus lenses . . . swing cameras upwards. Among them is William Deeke, of Pathé citizens have evacuated the city . . . no, not quite all . . . with the roar of war just behind them, three men are dragging heavy cases down the shell-smashed road along the bank of the Yangtze river. You can tell from the shape of the cases that inside are cameras, tripods, and tins of film . . . for these are newsreelmen . . . Norman Alley of Universal, Eric Mayell of Movietone . . . and Paul Alley of Gaumont-British (Norman and Paul are nothing more than a coincidence). They've seen enough of death . . . they're not waiting for the triumphal Japanese entry into the stricken city. But how to get away? Suddenly, round a bend in the river, they see an American gunboat heading upstream . . . frantically they wave and shout from the shore . . . the passing gunboat puts off a motor sampan and picks them up. A few minutes later, thankful for their rescue, Mayell and the

WESTERN UNION WIRE

We are standing on the deck of the Panay patrolling the swirling Yangtze intent on saving lives imperilled by the holocaust of war STOP As these scenes are filmed we are about 15 miles from Nanking to avoid shellfire STOP A Japanese launch approaches to verify our nationality which is obvious from our large ensign and two huge horizontal American flags spread across the decks so we should be safe even in this perilous zone STOP No such luck STOP Three and half hours later we are suddenly under attack by Japanese airmen STOP Panay's machine guns go into action but Japanese bombers stay out of range STOP Diving in relays of two and three they shatter Panay with about twenty-four direct hits STOP Panay sinking order given to abandon ship STOP Out of seventy-six aboard score are wounded two dying STOP There is absolutely no panic STOP Two small boats take turns in making for land STOP Skipper with wounded leg in last boat spots lone swimmer, probably sailor blown from ship by violence of explosions STOP We hide in reeds on small muddy island as two low flying Japanese planes have been cruising about STOP We don't know that they're still after us but are taking no chances all are fearful of further attack STOP From reeds we film scene of shipwreck and disaster STOP Out in river Panay slowly settles STOP She is being machine gunned and boarded by Japanese in launch STOP They leave her and we watch her founder beneath muddy waters of Yangtze STOP It was impossible beach her as her steam boiler had been ruptured STOP Her flag goes under less than two and half hours since first Japanese plane sighted STOP Executive Officer Lieut Anders shot in mouth unable speak gives orders in writing as small boats carry survivors to main bank STOP Now we film scenes on road to Hohsien three miles from river STOP Stretcher bearers worn out by shock made slow progress with wounded STOP At Hohsien Chinese show great kindness care consideration place every facility at our disposal at local hospital STOP By nightfall we are ready push on to Hanshan where we get word that British gunboats have come to rescue STOP Final scenes

filmed in Shanghai harbour as rescue flotilla arrives and US cruiser Augusta awaits heroes of the Yangtze STOP Japanese warship offers boats to take off survivors but they refuse preferring remain under protection of our own flag STOP As dusk deepens into darkness curtain falls on grave international incident STOP Happy new Year STOP
PAUL ALLEY STOP 433PM END

BACK in Nanking . . . as Japan pounds at the city walls, the capital is literally being torn to pieces with high explosives . . . the unholy roar sounds as if hell has come out to play. In a once quiet and dignified city suburb stands the British owned Yangtze Hotel . . . with all other whites, its manager has been ordered to leave . . . he *has* left . . . its staff of Chinese servants cowers in the cellars, fearful of death from the sky . . . but wait a minute . . . there's someone on the flat hotel roof . . . wow . . . its a cameraman . . . and he's shooting . . . why, he must be crazy . . . that's what they've been telling him for years . . . he just says "Maybe they're right!" . . . carries on. He's Arthur Menken, hard working, much travelled son of one of New York's leading society hostesses . . . but more important, he's the uncrowned king of Paramount's roving cameras. While his colleagues Paul and Norman Alley, and Eric Mayell (see above) are on their way up the Yangtze in the "Panay," he has stayed behind . . . he must be the last white man in the city . . . doesn't that prove he's crazy! Now he's shooting the final Japanese bombardment . . . in a few minutes he'll be away down the road to scoop the world on Japan's army marching into the Chinese capital.

When Menken arrived in Nanking, nearly two months ago, he chose to stay at the Yangtze Hotel because its roof commanded a grand view of the railroad station . . . he guessed that was what the Jap bombers would make for. On his rooftop perch he is just about a mile away from the station . . . close enough, but not too close! News comes through that the bombers are on their way . . . Menken's camera is loaded and ready . . . up he goes on to the roof . . . he's all set . . . here comes the attacking squadron . . . they're over the station . . . GOSH, they've passed it and are heading this way . . . suddenly Menken realises . . . they're not making for the railway, but for the million dollar Hsiankwan power station which makes all Nanking's electricity . . . *and the power house is just three hundred yards from the hotel!!!* In the next hour, Menken, with his eyes glued to his camera view-finder, sees a Japanese plane dive straight down vertically on the power house . . . almost crashing into the building at full throttle before releasing its bombs for two direct hits and zooming up again . . . while another plane, hit by a Chinese gun, crashes in a white puff of smoke (see picture).

Back in New York, Mrs. Menken gets one of those nice chatty letters from son Arthur . . . let's hope she can take it! . . . :—"The first few bombs went wide of the mark, splashing into ponds between the power house and the hotel—too close for comfort but . . . very nice for pictures. The following planes . . . dropped three eggs directly on the structure. . . . The Chinese anti-aircraft . . . brought down a plane directly in front of the building. It was impossible to get more than just the

"This is Arthur's! This is Arthur's!" (Paramount News)

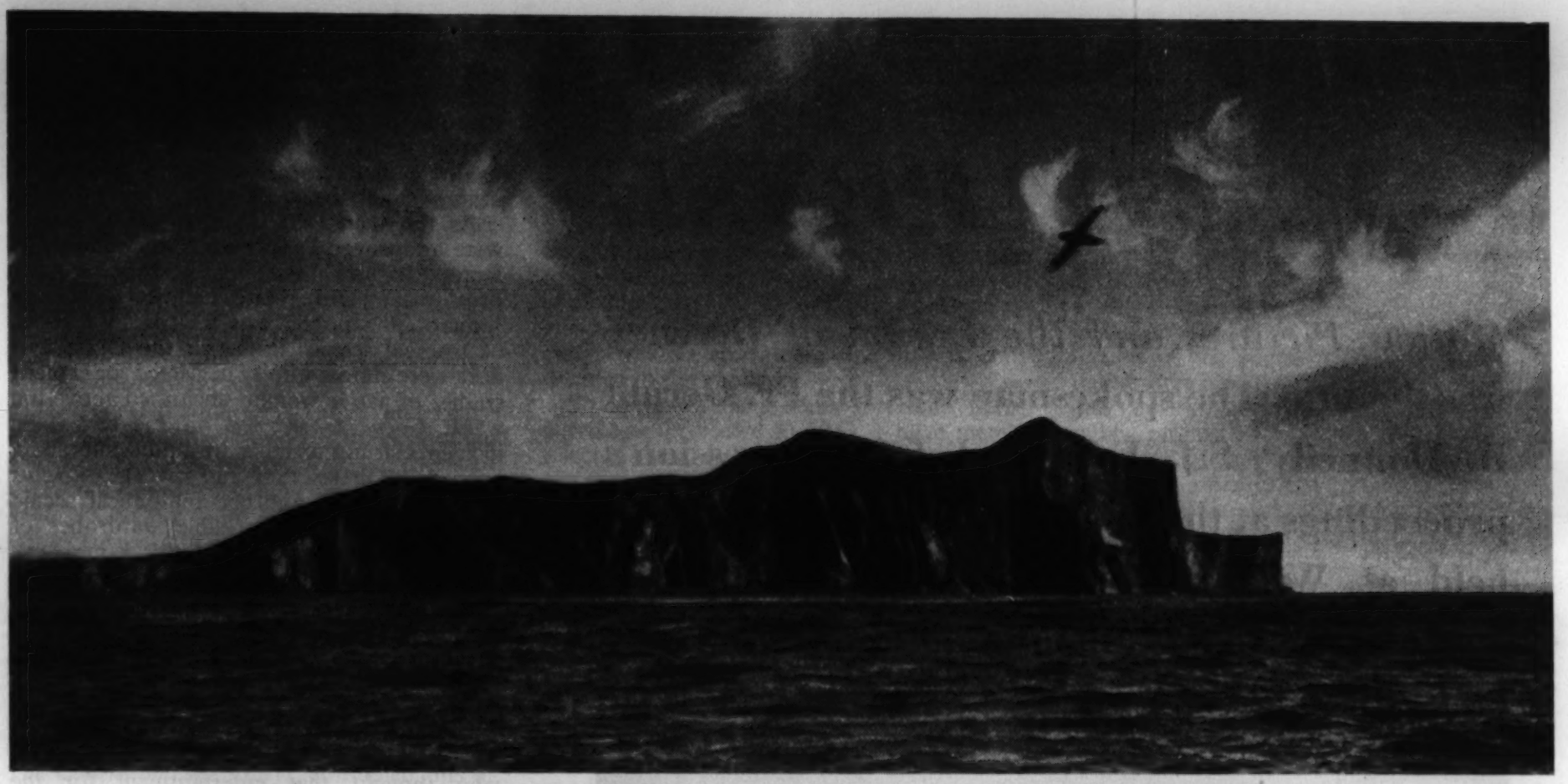
Arthur Menken

actual crash, because things were happening entirely too fast. A little later I got on to the roof of the Central High School near the hospital. This time the Jap planes headed smack for the hospital. Suddenly the leader went into a power dive and pointed directly where I was standing. Two bombs dropped from the plane, and I could hear them coming for the building with that terrible whishing sound that says, 'This is Arthur's! This is Arthur's!'. I ducked behind a door just in time. My car, by the gate, was punctured by fragments in five places . . . P.S. I'm under suspicion of espionage or something by the Chinese for being on the spot for both bombings; and then the Japs confiscated my films of their march into the city. But when I told them it was a record of a great victory, they gave 'em back."

That is the climax to the most daring and dangerous period of Menken's life. How's this for a record of Action with a capital A:— In 1935, the heat and dust of war in Ethiopia . . . the constant fear of tropical disease, of being stabbed in the back by a dark skinned tribesman . . . thirst and dirty food . . . vermin ridden rooms in native villages where a white man is an enemy. In 1936, war in Spain . . . the siege of the Alcazar . . . wounded, he carries on, the only newsreelman to film the raising of the siege . . . then charged by Franco with sending out uncensored material . . . ordered to leave Spain, and never return. In 1937, the U.S. flood disaster . . . shooting from a tiny boat that twice is almost swamped by the swirling waters . . . riots in the motor and steel strikes . . . the air whistling with flying bricks . . . and now, war in China.

To him, and to all the world's roving news cameras, fate and their work puts them on death's trail wherever he is. Howdy, Death, glad to meet you.

The next number of "World Film News" will contain an exciting and amusing article on the adventures of Pathe's cameraman, Richard Butler, whilst filming the Spanish War.



200,000 Feet on FOULA

Michael Powell's account of the filming of "The Edge of the World" reviewed by John Taylor

Is there, in the film business, a man who speaks the truth? Is there a man who can tell a story without glossing over the direct, without enlarging the glories. There have been many stories of film trips to far parts, told by cameramen and prop men, directors and sound men, told while hanging over bars, while sitting in hotels, while waiting for the sun. But I doubt if they ever told the true story even to their wives in the secrecy of the bed chamber where even in the film business nothing but the truth is supposed to be told. Is it possible that from these men will come one who does not only speak the truth but writes it—no of course it is not—but all the the same I feel uneasy—is the film business losing its grip? Are there weaklings amongst us—men who will say: "They gave me £500" and did get £500. Men who will say: "Don't be silly, that was only a publicity stunt."

A week ago I could have said, "We are safe boys"—no one will say there is an honest man in the business—that is if they are honest themselves—but now, as I said, I feel uneasy and suspicious, for out of our jungle has come a document, which rings. Even the title 200,000 *Feet on Foula* sounds like the truth, for who ever heard anyone tell the true footage? But I hold in reserve that Powell either did shoot 200,000 feet, is an honest man and a traitor to all true expedition men, or that he shot 500,000 feet, is the biggest and best liar amongst us, and a credit to us all. I hold this reserve because long experience has taught me to be cautious about these things.

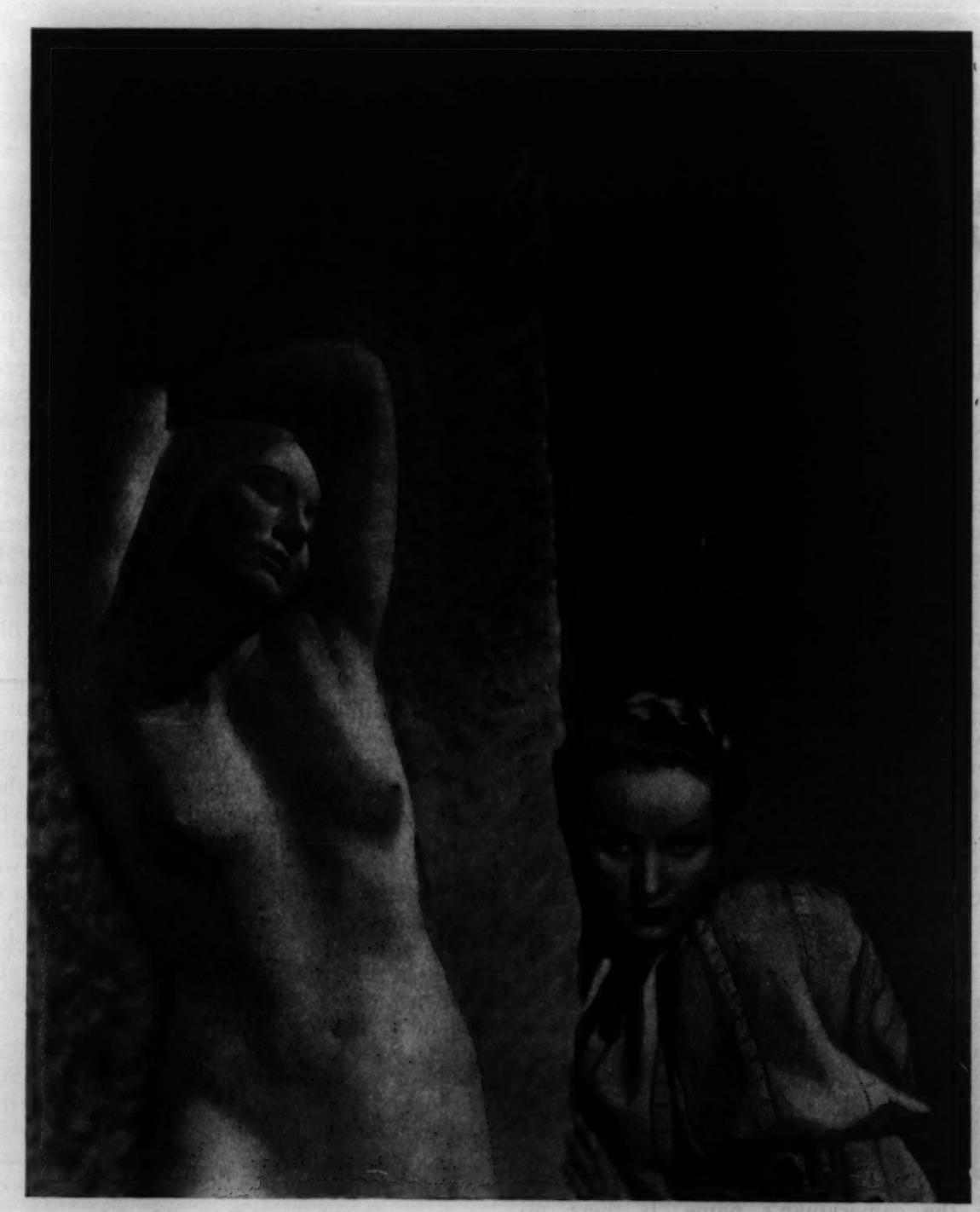
At the moment I am on horns and so will you be when you read the book. Take for example what Powell says about his girl friend Frankie who worked on the film. "I have always failed to understand a film director or stage producer, who uses his position to give a friend a job." Followed by "Not a soul should know that we were engaged or anything more to each other than director and actress" and then "Only I myself, could weigh all the reasons why Frankie had to play the part." And they called him honest John. Ease the weight on to the other horn for he continues: "During the production of the film I would treat her exactly as I treated any other member of the company." You may say "God help the company." But Powell tends to ram it down your throat by, "The experienced onlooker will smile at this ruthless decision and indeed at the whole situation, for he knows very well what will happen"—but Powell is not thinking what you are, for his concern is the difficulty of directing his girl friend. When you get a man who says these things about himself and his one and only, what can you do but be uneasy and hope that he doesn't feel the same about the more serious things in life? But as you go through the book you realise that he does feel the same about the more serious things. The first cameraman on the film had never shot an exterior picture before and shot wide open using the shutter to control the exposure—entirely the director's responsibility, but Powell, and I do not like it, gives the lurid details, even the cameraman's name. Is there no honour amongst honest men? Apart from this, the book is the best description of film making I have read, the details of contact making, the amount of preparation, the waiting for the sun, the rush to finish the film, the producers demand that the unit should come back with an unfinished picture, the picture almost finished, and then a head office man forcing the unit back to London. One thing comes out of the book and that is that the making of a film like *The Edge of the World* is a specialised job. That a studio director requires an assistant director and a cameraman who have done the work before.

Anyone thinking of going into the film business would do well to read the book. Anyone in the business thinking of making a film on similar lines should read it, for out of it come a dozen points. Is it good to take your wife or girl with you? Is it good to run a unit on democratic lines, and when it is finished is it good to write a book about it? Maybe. On the whole this book has a good feeling about it. The unit seemed to work well together and with the people of the island, but I hold to my reserve for occasionally a false note is hit; when Powell brings back a Shetland Islander to be his man servant. Maybe it is just as right to bring back an islander to be your man servant as it is to bring back someone from Southwark. What kind of man is a man servant anyway? So I hold my reserve and say Powell is possibly the biggest and best liar of us all.

("200,000 *Feet on Foula*", *by Michael Powell. Faber and Faber*, 12*s*. 6*d*.)

HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE

Motion Pictures and the Legion of Decency **was the title. The spokesman was the Fr. Gerald B. Donnelly, S.J. Extracted from a session's proceedings at the Institute of Human Relations, held at William's College, Mass., under the auspices of the National Conference of Jews and Christians.**



"Song of Songs" (*Paramount*)

I HAVE been directed to confine myself strictly to one subject—namely, the work and results of the Legion of Decency.

I believe that the most graphic way to describe its accomplishment is to remind you of the type of entertainment being purveyed by the film theatres just before the Legion swung into action in 1934.

As the year 1933 opened, picture circles were agog over Paramount's announced intention to film *Sanctuary*, a story of rape, prostitution and related subjects. During January, the public was treated to a series of tropical scenics in which the fauna and flora were almost wholly neglected for camera studies of native women unclothed above the waist. *Goona Goona* led off the series, its incidents strung together by a plot embracing aphrodisiac drugs, rape and revenge. *Virgins of Bali* followed, another anatomical scenic dealing with the remarkable wardrobes of tropical women. On top of this came *Love Potion*, a third romance of native toxicology and nudity.

This cycle of bared-chest drama meanwhile encouraged one producer to go a bit farther. He filmed *This Naked Age*, a story of love in an American nudist colony.

Meanwhile Warners launched *Frisco Jenny*. It roused vigorous protest from people who thought that entertainment for the masses should be reticent on the subject of sex.

But, unfortunately, it was just at this time that Paramount chose to release *She Done Him Wrong*, Miss Mae West's first film-starring vehicle. Miss West proved to be a singer, and the state censors, charmed with her voice, overlooked the rough spots in one of her lyrics having the innocent title, "The Man Who Took His Time".

Paramount's *No Man of Her Own* contributed a new study of the unhappy small-town girl made happy—or at least well housed, well dressed and well fed—by the handsome adventurer from the big city. Because this film emphasised the fact that the wages of sin are sometimes (as the films themselves say) "the pretty things a woman loves", it irritated that large body of citizens whom Hollywood was then calling the "blue noses". Its advertisements glorifying Clark Gable as "the man who made strong women weak" annoyed them still more.

The lechery of a fanatic monk and his two attempts at rape were the motivation of *Rasputin*, Metro-Goldwyn's vehicle for the Barrymores. *Parachute Jumper*, with Doug. Fairbanks, Jr., outraged many of the customers by its salacious lines and incidents.

People wondered how *Hot Pepper*, which Fox concocted at this time, could have passed the industry's censor. A rowdy farce with Boccaccian dialogue, it climaxed in a scene of progressive undress by the heroine, plainly taken over from the burlesque theatres.

Animal Kingdom began its run, showing quite charmingly that a man's mistress can be his more truly than the women he married.

Then Cecil DeMille came out with *The Sign of the Cross*, a religious spectacle which featured a dance that was not only explicitly erotic but which dared for the first time in the history of the public screen to introduce the

note of homosexuality. Columbia followed with *Child of Manhattan*, a tear-drenched drama in which the heroine justified her incontinence by pleading passionately, "But don't you see, mother, I love him, I love him". The same moral principle—that deep human affection is adequate excuse for sin—was preached to the patrons by a magnificent version of *Farewell to Arms*, starring Miss Helen Hayes.

Paramount, which in 1930 had signed the code and admitted its responsibility for entertainment tending to improve the race, next released Marlene Dietrich's *The Blonde Venus*, which improved nobody.

The idea that adultery is a slight and amusing adventure and one that any understanding wife should easily forgive was the thesis of *Cynara*, a Broadway drama taken over by the Warners. In the same Borther's penitentiary saga called *Ladies they Talk About*, there were a number of frank references to the starved physical instincts of the prisoners, and a group of highly offensive witticisms by an aged prostitute who should not have been in the film at all.

The Half Naked Truth, RKO's comedy, indulged a number of smutty references which caused public comment, and Universal's opus, *The Cohens and the Kellys*, contained bits of dialogue distinctly not for family trade.

Shortly afterwards the same company broke out with *Love Birds* which was a great deal worse. A bride-and-groom story, it featured several ribald situations and plenty of off-colour lines. The content and tone of *They Just Had to Get Married*, put out a little later by the same studio, were just what you imagine they were.

Some interesting story purchases were announced just about this time. One company bought *Shanghai Gesture*, a pornographic drama which had created a bit of a squall on Broadway. Paramount acquired *Jennie Gerhardt*, one of Theodore Dreiser's human documents. And also *The Great Magoo*, a bawdy comedy from Times Square that even the newspaper critics had gagged at. M.G.M. took on a tale disturbingly called *Our Moral Standards*. And a bulletin announced the purchase of *Design for Living*, a play that conflicted just about 100 per cent with the design for producing set down by the production code.

By this time Fox's *State Fair* was at the height of its run. An excellent story. But the film introduced a new device—a whole sequence of camera shots symbolising seduction and a shadowgraph of what I might call its climax. One of these devices was immediately seized upon by RKO in its production of *Christopher Strong*, in which the lovely Katharine Hepburn played an unmarried heroine who chose suicide as the most heroic way out of her biological dilemma.

Paramount's *Pick-Up* continued the trend to lecherous lines. *Sailor's Luck* had to be operated on for coarseness. Warner's *Central Airport* bore down heavily on the salacious with its bedroom and disrobing scenes. M.G.M.'s *The Barbarian* was a sheik romance in which sleeping arrangements in the desert were the centre of interest.

Forty-Second Street had excised from it what was probably the dirtiest joke in screen history. Joan Crawford appeared in her fourth or fifth story about tangled sex relations. M.G.M.'s *Hell Below* opened with a seduction scene and was punctuated with rowdy dialogue. Maurice Chevalier's *A Bed Time Story* was not for tots. *Reunion in Vienna* was licensed.

Good-bye Again, Warner's new release, argued that a good man should be faithful to his mistress and not go gadding about with other women. *Baby Face*, a convincing essay on feminine success through promiscuity, was so convincing that it was condemned to the cooler.

So there we have some forty-odd films, current or projected in 1933. I have merely selected them as samples. To be sure there were many more of the same type. But these will serve to remind you of the topics and tone of the screen before the revolution.

I SHOULD like to insist, though, that ridding the screen of obscenities and indecencies was only a secondary object of the Legion. The chief purpose of the movement was to rid the screen of morally subversive stories—stories that lowered traditional moral standards, that persuaded people, and especially the young, to accept false principles of conduct.

By the traditional standards of morality I mean such principles of conduct as the following: Murder is wrong; stealing is wrong; perjury is wrong. These standards, together with many relating to sex, follow from the code of right and wrong written into the consciences of men by God, Himself, and have been generally known and accepted during all of the centuries by Christians, Jews, pagans and men of no religious affiliation.

Our leaders felt that any attack made upon these principles—be it an argumentative attack, as in a book of philosophy, or an emotional attack, as in a drama—was a vicious thing, destructive of the social good, and to be vigorously combatted all the more so when the attack was being made in so persuasive and popular medium as the films.

Our leaders found along about 1930 or so that the films had climbed into the pulpit and were preaching the most subversive type of moral theses.

I certainly do not mean to accuse Hollywood of deliberately attempting to break down the traditional standards of morality. That would be a charge most unfair and wholly untrue. A new field of story materials had been opened to the screen by the perfection of the sound picture, and the producers were merely using these new materials, and not at all engaged in a deep plot against public morals.

Let me, in conclusion, ask you to compare the screen fare of 1933 with that of the present.

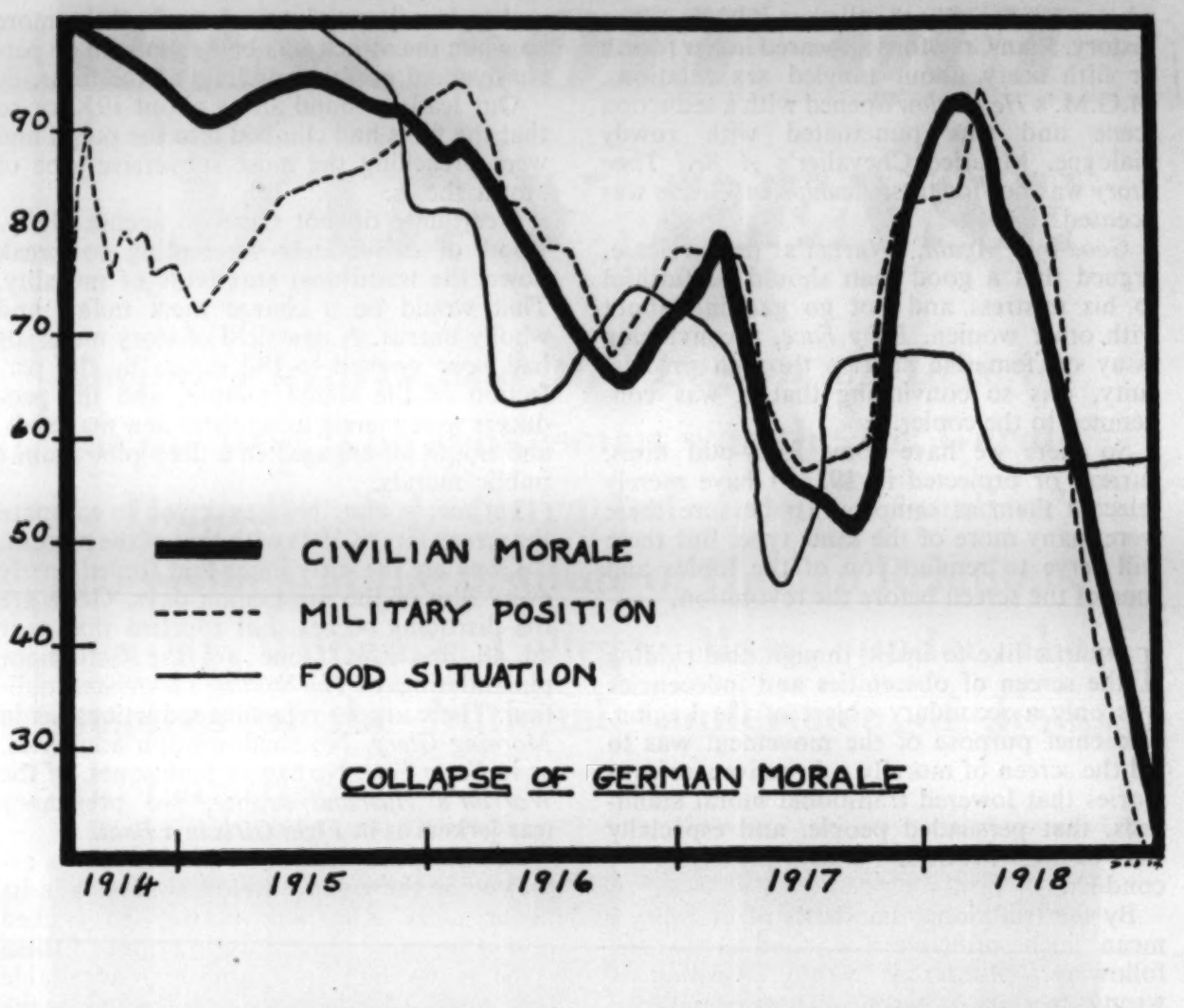
Gone are the dirty jokes that fouled nearly every film of the pre-Legion days. Gone are the disrobing scenes that touched that year an all-time low. Gone are the Ostermoor philanderings of *The Smiling Lieutenant* tradition. There are no reluctant seductions, as in *Morning Glory*. No shadowgraph adulteries, as in *State Fair*. No bawdy burlesques, of the *Warrior's Husband* school. No pregnancy tear-jerkers as in *Eight Girls in a Boat*.

I estimate that the industry this year is experiencing the greatest financial success in its history. The films are playing to packed houses here and abroad. But in none of them is the hero a glamorous gangster or admirable rebel against the moral or civil law, nor is the heroine sympathetically portrayed as an admirable street-walker, kept woman, unmarried mother or predatory wench.

Most remarkable thing of all—not one of the films persuades its audience that crime is romantic, seduction funny, chastity ridiculous, adultery justified by a great love, or that traditional moral convictions are false and out-moded.

All of this has been the work and the result of the Legion of Decency.

"Sanctuary" filmed as "The Story of Temple Drake"



"That UNSCRUPULOUS Rascal NORTHCLIFFE"

The decision to develop German radio services at the attention on the problem of and bears witness to the other countries. By highly lingual broadcasts, by services and by the free loan countries, Germany, Italy hold on world opinion.

Britain has yet to take against this world-wide and prestige. Here is an of the powerful use of Government against German War.

It would be a great mistake to think that Britain is bad at propaganda. In the use of the old-fashioned media for showing the flag—visiting cruisers, ambassadorial panache, etc.—we were, before the War, first rate. During the War we were responsible for the greatest feat of propaganda in modern history. The value of our propaganda behind the German lines has been variously assessed, but no one doubts that it saved the Allies a year of war. German experts have claimed that it was actually the decisive factor.

A new study of this particular aspect of our War activities has recently been made by Dr. G. G. Bruntz in the United States. While many accounts have been given of what went on under Lord Northcliffe at Crewe House, Dr. Bruntz has had access to the archives of the Military Intelligence Division in Washington and there is a weight of documentation in his analysis which makes it unique. A short account of it has already been published by the School of Public Relations at Princeton University, in the Public Opinion Journal, one of the most interesting specialised papers in the world. The full book is due for publication by the Stanford Press.

Britain, of course, was not alone in setting up a propagandist headquarters. All the Allied Governments did so. There were the Alliance Francaise and the Maison de la Presse in France. In the United States the Military Intelligence section of the Army disseminated propaganda behind the lines, and the Committee of Public Information and the Friends of German Democracy complemented the effort in civilian quarters. At headquarters, the United States Army had a psychology section which saw to the examination of prisoners, and actually kept a graph of the ebb and flow of German morale. But the greatest single factor was the leadership of Lord Northcliffe at Crewe House. Writing of the 'despondency, discontent, depression, hanging heads' in 1918 a German paper said:

> To-day we can recognise the origin of this depression of German will power. It was the long-advertised publicity offensive of the Entente directed against us under England's lead and under the special direction of that unprincipled unscrupulous rascal Northcliffe.

General von Hutier, in an 18th Army Order in late 1918, paid a similar compliment:

> The enemy begins to realise that we cannot be crushed by blockade. He is therefore trying a last resort. While engaging to the utmost his military force, he is racking his imagination for ruses, trickery and other methods of which he is a past master, to induce in the minds of the German people a doubt in their invincibility. He has founded for this purpose a special Ministry, "The Ministry for the Destruction of German Confidence," at the head of which he has put the most thoroughgoing scoundrel of all the Entente—Northcliffe.

This will give a taste of the dramatic quality of the evidence which Dr. Bruntz has accumulated. He describes the Northcliffe tactic as designed to shatter the faith of the Germans in their military machine and to prepare the way for the overthrow of the Imperial Government. To this end, millions of leaflets were dropped behind the German lines. Every German expert of the time, civil and military, agreed that they had the desired effect on the tired-out troops, and despite every offer of reward for returned pamphlets and threat of punishment, and despite every counter-effort on the part of the domestic propaganda machine in Germany, their influence increased. The German military authorities made perhaps the fatal mistake of putting their counter propaganda in military hands, where, of course, no appreciation of the problem, or concentration for this very specialised task, could be expected. One German paper, later on, made the astonishing statement that the propaganda had become so effective, that by 1918 the Allied Govern-

ULOUS CLIFFE"

Arabic, Spanish and Portu- B.B.C. has focussed public international Propaganda effect of propaganda from organised systems of multi- port of films, by press ser- of experts to backward and Russia strengthen their effective counter-measures attack on British interests account by John Grierson propaganda by the British many during the Great

A German War Propaganda Film.

By Courtesy of Associated Picture Corporation.

ments had usurped the confidence of the German people, and that they actually 'place greater trust in Woodrow Wilson than in their own leaders.'

In the final issue of one of their propaganda publications the Germans said:

> In the sphere of leaflet propaganda the enemy has defeated us. We realised that in this struggle of life and death, it was necessary to use the enemy's own methods. But the spirit of the enemy leaflets will not permit itself to be killed. The enemy has defeated us, not as man against man in the field of battle, bayonet against bayonet. No! Bad contents in poor printing on poor paper have made our arm lame.

BUT Dr. Bruntz's analysis of the failure of the German counter-propaganda is more to the mark. The German Government, under the leadership of Ludendorff and Hindenburg made a desperate attempt to keep the propaganda at a distance by intensifying patriotic instruction among the German troops. The points to be emphasised were: the reason Germany entered, the results especially to the workers if they lost, the great strength of the German military machine, the victories of the "U" boats, the work of the great munition factories, the necessity of the co-operation of all classes, military, governmental, industrial and commercial, and the necessity for authority on the one side, obedience on the other. Special emphasis was to be laid on faithfulness to the Kaiser.

But this turned out to be arid stuff against the more human appeals of the Allies. The German caste system smothered it from the start. Moreover, says Dr. Bruntz, the military men were too busy with military details to bother about the *Vaterlandische Unterricht*. As one German paper put it:

> What good would it do to try to oppose the arguments of the enemy for a struggle for freedom and justice against the militarists of Europe.

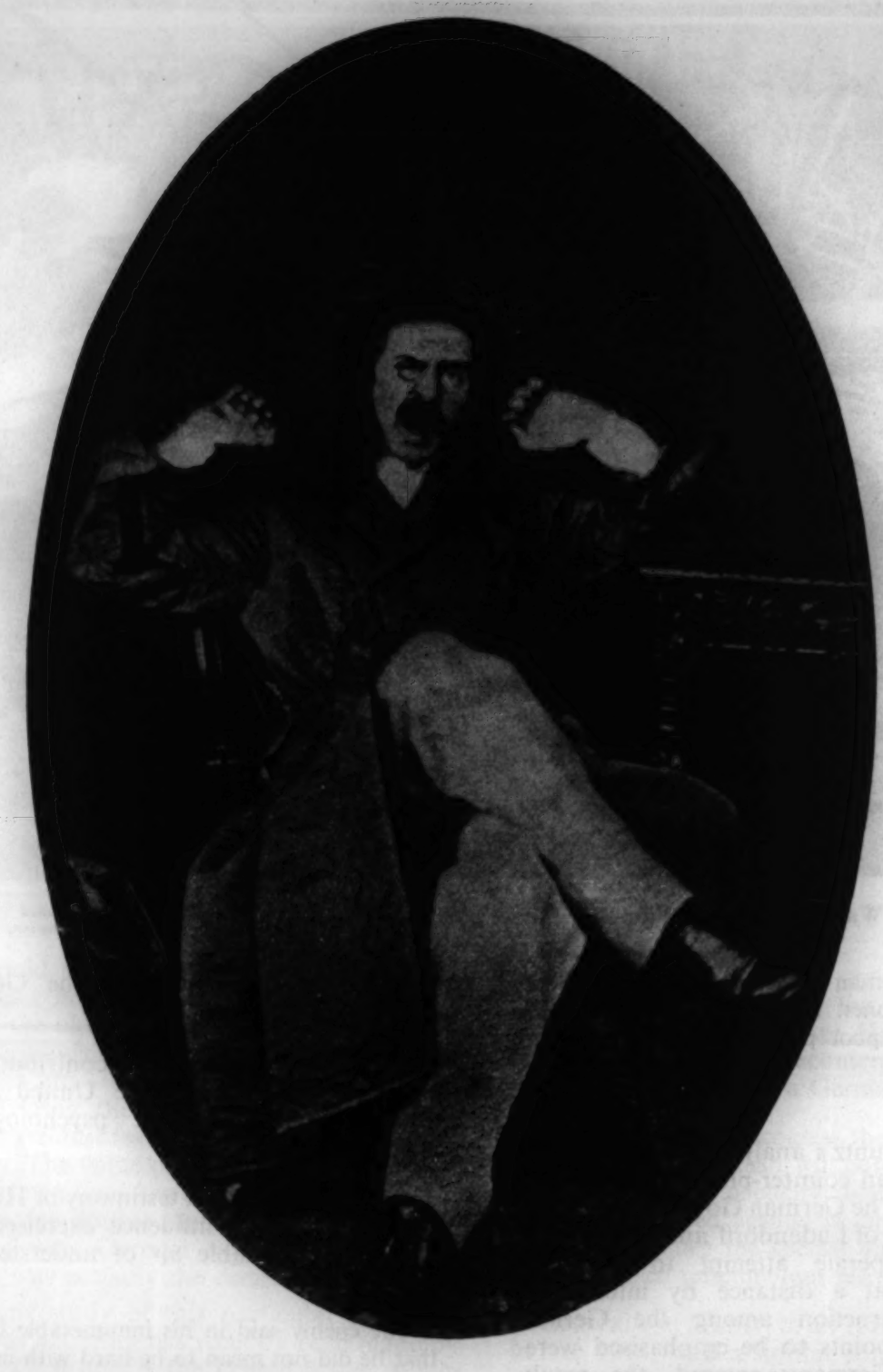
The Germans, in fact, failed to realise the living nature of propaganda and the military leaders were not likely to be the most inspired teachers. The allied propagandists were more successful in Germany than the German propagandists themselves.

Dr. Bruntz's most unique contribution is the account, taken from the United States Military Archives, of the psychology of desertion.

Here is the important testimony of Hindenburg on the subtle influence exercised and there is a remarkable air of understanding about it.

> The enemy said in his innumerable leaflets that he did not mean to be hard with us, that we should only be patient and renounce all that we have conquered, then all would be well. We could then again live in peace. New men and a new government would provide for peace within Germany. Further struggle and efforts were useless. Such the soldiers read and discussed. The soldiers thought surely these could not all be lies, and permitted themselves to be poisoned and poisoned others.
>
> "I can only talk as a soldier at the front," said the artillery Lieutenant, L., "but even the little *flügblatter*, after you read them, you imagined you read the truth, that our Government was lying to us. I remember one, after I read it, I felt like blowing my brains out. I never let one of my men read them, but it was difficult—they were everywhere."

Dr. Bruntz's account is full of brilliant, dramatic material of this kind, and I, for one, now look forward with excitement to the publication of the complete work. It will not only be a gift to students of propaganda, but between its academic lines, it will also be, I am sure, one of the most poignant accounts of mass heartbreak every published.



PROLETARIAN PANORAMA

In the vivid, colourful life of the old 'Frisco days, Hollywood has found some of its best film material. Here is a glimpse of the rip-roaring maelstrom that was London in Victorian days—its public executions, its cut-throats and criminals, its slums, its violent social protests, its costers, its music-hall, and its theatre—waiting to put gusto into British films.

SOME two-hundred-thousand of the most desperate and degraded characters of London, packed together beneath the walls of Newgate prison throughout the night, awaiting a public execution: a milling crowd, lit by flickering torches, rolling to and fro and roaring and singing, blaspheming and cursing, picking pockets and robbing as the opportunity arose.

Near four o'clock labourers working by lantern light put the finishing touches to the scaffold: soon an ancient and decrepit old man sidles out of the door of the prison and cautiously tests the drop; then, amid a roar of jeering and execration, slips back into the prison. At half-past seven St. Sepulchre's bell starts to toll and out of the prison emerges a little procession, the jailers, the minister of religion and other functionaries and the seven condemned "pirates" pinioned and "literally as white as marble."

Calcraft, the aged executioner, now proceeds to do his work with ghastly dexterity, amidst a terrible silence over the sea of upturned faces, pale, strained and eager, spectators on roof tops, railings and on tops of stationary vans. A crash that thunders across the streets; and Calcraft hanging on to each of the seven hanging men in turn to ensure that justice had been done; and a great and growing shout from the crowd "Calcraft, Calcraft, he's the man."

The last of such public executions was in 1868: the above description is summarised from Peter Quennell's *Victorian Panorama* (Batsford, 7*s.* 6*d.*) which, with text and pictures, comes to remind us again what material the Victorian age offers to British Cinema, comparable in many ways to the old Chicago and 'Frisco days which have served so well for American movies. Lighting up the low and high spots of Victorian life, giving a provoking glimpse of the rip-roaring maelstrom that was London in the last century.

What a London it was! The aristocracy, with their senile comforts and exclusive clubs, their gaming and their whoring; and the new rich with their more ostentatious pleasures; the middle-classes with growing power and narrowing consciences; the working people, divided into numerous strata, from the top-hatted mechanics and trades unionists to the dwellers in the slums, which in the very heart of the metropolis, offered a hideous contrast to the flaunted wealth of aristocracy.

One such slum is described in Mr. Quennell's book: access to it was through "a dark, narrow entrance, scarcely wider than a doorway, running beneath the first floor of one of the houses in the adjoining street. The court itself is fifty yards long and not more than three yards wide, surrounded by lofty wooden houses, with jutting abutments in many of the upper stories that almost exclude the light, and give them the appearance of being about to tumble down on the heads of the investigators." Hundreds were packed into small spaces like this; as in St. Giles Rookery where ninety-five small houses were split up between two-thousand-eight-hundred-and-fifty individuals. In most of these slums sanitation was so bad and refuse so heaped up on waste patches of ground, that outbreaks of cholera

and fever were frequent. It was this, and not Christian charity, that moved the wealthy to approve slum clearances—at least in the heart of the city—for epidemics spread from the hovels of the poor to the expensive homes of the rich.

In these slums were gathered some amazing people, engaged in some extraordinary occupations. Several hundred people depended for their livelihood on the rubbish and ordures of the city, ranging from the Toshers—described as "a comparatively prosperous, though regrettably intemperate body"—to the Mud-Larks and Pure-Finders, both of whom existed close to the starvation line. The Pure-Finders carried horse-dung from the streets to the tanyards of Bermondsey, where they sold it for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 2*d.* per stable bucket "according to its quality." Mud-Larks were mainly old women or young children who earned about threepence a day by scouring the Thames shore at low tide for chips of wood, old iron, bones and coals.

THE Toshers were sewer hunters. They made their way into the sewers, though this was forbidden by law, dressed in long, greasy, velveteen coats, furnished with pockets of vast capacity, and their legs encased in dirty canvas trousers, carrying a bag on their back and a pole, seven or eight feet long, with large iron hoe at one end.

This pole was used to try their ground where it seemed unsafe, and should the Tosher sink in the quagmire, to reach out and fasten to some jutting object with which the Tosher could pull himself out. The dangers of this occupation included the danger of loose brickwork injuring or hurting the Tosher, and attacks by ferocious rats. In return for braving these perils, the Toshers reaped a steady harvest of coins, copper, silver, and occasionally gold, of knives, forks and spoons and at lucky times, jewels. The main work however was the collection of metals, rope and bones. Once home the Toshers shared out the results of their work and adjourned to a pub to drink and eat away the spoils in carouses that ended only when all the money was gone.

In the Victorian scale of things the muckrakers were the lowest of the low classes—that was before much-raking became a profession, like the law or the church—and far above them in station and ways of living were the costers, who, of all the metropolitan working classes, have influenced most the language, the song and the tradition of the people. In Victorian days they were powerfully organised, with their own standards of conduct, modes of dress, traditions and prejudices; they enjoyed boxing, gambling, rat-hunting, pigeon shooting and music. They had a special hatred of the police: to "serve out" a copper was regarded among them as an act of considerable bravery and merit.

They were staunch radicals, had a contempt for the aristocracy and their amusements. Their feelings in this respect must have paved the way for many a Sunday newspaper owners' fortune. Their truculent independence and individualism, which grew out of their calling, their generosity, their songs and their patter; these have left a permanent mark on London life and culture.

Mr. Quennell barely touches on the other street life; the hawkers, the jugglers, acrobats, tumblers, sword-swallowers, the hansom cab drivers, whose modern counterparts carry the same virulent radicalism and independence, the musicians, from bag-pipe players to hurdy-gurdies with or without the performing monkeys. In this richness of life, this panorama of violent contrasts, rich in character and event, there is material for a hundred films. From this crude spawning of life over the metropolis, the social wrongs, the rigid class divisions, the poverty and reckless expenditure of wealth, the laxness and narrowness, there grew a character and vigour not nearly so widespread in present-day Londoners, too ironed out by schooling and too fastened down by suburban standards and conceptions to bear comparison with their grandfathers, In our politics, our drama, our amusements, even in our religion, our best seems to show a little dimly against the Victorians.

Ironical that our generation, so wise and so widely knowledged, which has thrown off the fetters clamped on the Victorian, should turn to Victorian days to find the giants with which to make biography, history, and drama. For all the facile theories, since exploded by the powerful logic of events, the rationalism and romanticism, the vulgarity and the refinement that was worse; the noble aspirations and the ignoble practice; for all Mr. Badman becoming John Bull and wearing bowler, black coat and trousers instead of leggings and check waistcoat; for all the blasphemy and sanctimony, there were giants in those days, that our troubled restless age looks back upon with puzzled awe.

The worst of Victorianism tottered on to the senile debauchery and tinsel that were Edwardian days; the best, the integrity, the boldness, the sense of man's power and rights, found its expression in the aggressive truculent, turbulent and restless movements of the pre-war days; the strikes that swept the industries with fever, the embittered, angry, ferocious employers and the rebellious workman, the clash of forces, halted by the war, which yet toppled over for all time the Liberalism that had lived for decades by its adroit balancing between the contending social elements.

IN the conditions of Victorian England popular art was bound to flourish. Here is one side of it—"the great Ross" singing the ballad of Sam Hall in a cellar in Maiden Lane. Dressed for the part in ragged clothes, with a battered hat on his head, a blackened clay pipe in his mouth, which with a scowl he would remove and begin "as if half in soliloquy, half in address to an imaginary audience, his slow chant of the condemned felon":

> And the parson he will come,
> He will come,
> And the parson he will come,
> He will come:
> And the parson he will come,
> And he'll look so blasted glum;
> And he'll talk of Kingdom Come:
> *Damn his Eyes.*

On the Victorian stage Mr. Quennell has much to say. The secret of modern decadence, he fancies, lies in the fact that acting has become a respectable profession, like pedalling stocks and shares or governing a colony, and the magnificent theatrical masks of

(*Continued on page* 21).

Happy Hampstead **(from 'Victorian Panorama')**

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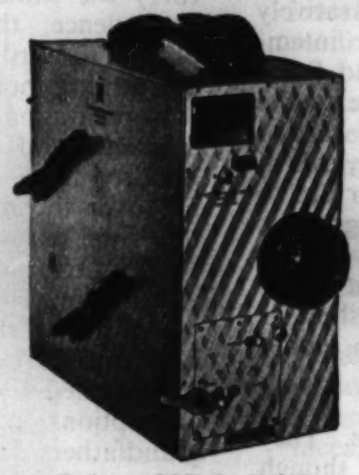

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Samuel Phelps as Cardinal Wolsey.

fifty years ago have been replaced by the more insipid countenances of numerous ladies and gentlemen who are equally at home on the golf course and on the boards. "A true actor is the slave and victim of his calling. Grease paint sinks deep into his skin. The habit of so counterfeiting emotion lends a sort of glorious insincerity and magniloquent humbug to everything he says and does; and though great actors are as rare as great painters or great musicians, it is one of the chief beauties of the theatrical career that every actor should, at one moment or another, give the impression that he feels he is *great*, or that greatness is still hovering within his grasp. Modesty, respectability, social conformity, are all equally out of place in the members of a cast who (here and elsewhere) have achieved their most conspicuous triumphs at a period when they were classified as rogues and vagabonds, and have lost in importance as they have gained in position and wealth."

Among the causes for the change, which was accelerated towards the end of the last century, Mr. Quennell places the disappearance of the old pit, which, towards the middle of the century began to be crowded away into the back of the house by the introduction of orchestra stalls. Smoky, violent in approval or disapproval, but the focus of intense enthusiasm, its electrified responses united actors and audience. None of the haughty indifference of the stalls of to-day, the late-comers, the audible whispering throughout the play. The theatre, says Mr. Quennell, was "still largely proletarian." At Sadlers Wells Phelps played for nearly twenty years to crowded, enthusiastic audiences. There were Macready and Kean, and last of the line, though with regrettable aspirations to respectability, Henry Irving. As the theatre steadily became more prosperous it became less vigorous. Vitality was lost as the social status of the audience improved.

The masses turned elsewhere. New and robust entertainments developed from the saloons, cider-cellars, and coal-holes of early Victorian London. During the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, cheap theatres known as "dukeys"—at which the audience secured admission for a penny ahead and the leading man received about twelve shillings a week for three performances an evening—offered cheap, clamorous and exciting fare. Melodramas, and fragments of historical and Shakespearian tragedy—Quennell mentions Macbeth in a red coat and waistcoat and Gloucester in a tweed suit—were played behind tallow footlights, the audience meanwhile enjoying pancakes and pickled whelks. In this period came the music-hall with its gusto and vitality and its roots in the people, its close relationship and intimacy with its audience, its greatest talents. Here we first meet the original "daring young man on the flying trapeze," whose gracefulness won the hearts of the ladies, and such figures as Dan Leno and Marie Lloyd, whose picture, says Mr. Quennell "splendid in ostrich feathers and short frilly skirts, helps us to understand both the temperament of the audience and the genius of the woman by whom they were delighted. We re-live her existence off the stage—the whelks, champagne, robust vulgarity and careless open-handed generosity—and we imagine the triumphant effect of her most rousing songs—that mixture of innuendo and unblushing innocence, as different from our modern conception of popular humour as the atmosphere of a modern cocktail-bar from the dusky-golden, gloomy yet glittering illumination that glorifies the sanctum of an old-fashioned pub."

It was the breach between the people and the theatre, the breach between drama and its roots in ordinary people, that reduced the theatre to its present level.

The best of Victorian entertainment, the vitality, the gusto, the crudeness and the rock-bottom realism went into pictures; began flickering across the halls and showplaces of all England, straight melodrama, right besting wrong, cowboys riding and shooting, bad men losing and good men winning, girls wronged and avenged; and the slapstick pantomime and genius that was Chaplin.

Will films go the way of the theatre?

I once heard Mr. Robert Flaherty say that in order to progress, the cinema needed a specialisation of audiences—theatres catering for different tastes and levels of culture. This has much to recommend it on the surface, but in actual fact would mark the beginning of the end of movies as a vital force. For would not this mean all the so-called art and culture in one cinema, and all the vitality, crudeness, and movement in the other? There are too many advisers, missionaries, and chappellers busy taking the life and guts out of the movies, without seeking to provide a public for the insipid mixture bound to come of such pretensions to high art.

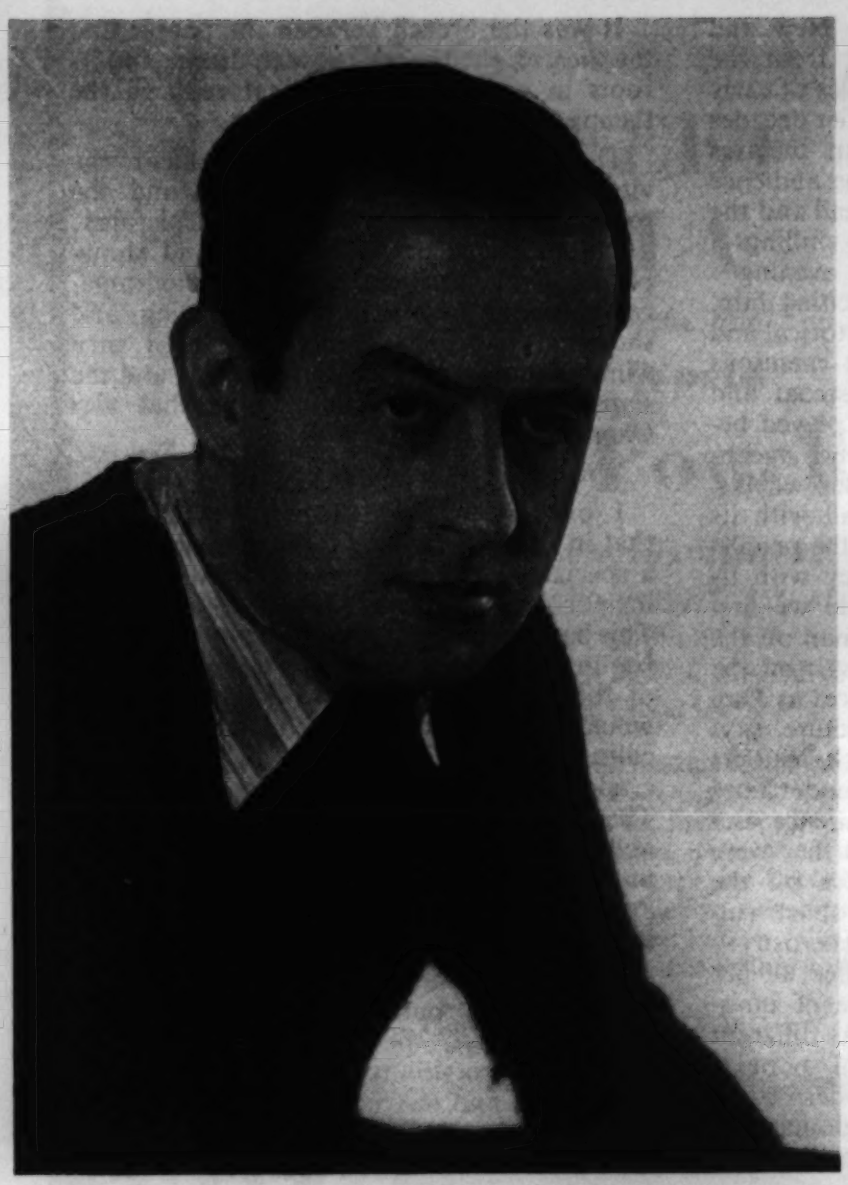
Victorian Panorama is well worth a close reading: it is but a surface-skimming of Victorian days, but enough to provide valuable instruction to the purveyors of mass amusement and instruction to-day.

Richard Carr

"The daring young man on the flying trapeze"

Marie Lloyd

The illustrations for this article are all taken from 'Victorian Panorama,' by Peter Quennell, by courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Batsford, Ltd.



The Realist REVOLUTION that 'ZOLA' omitted

by

Alberto Cavalcanti

I HAVE been criticised for my article on Paul Muni's performance in *The Life of Emile Zola*. People don't seem to understand how I could both praise the actor enthusiastically and at the same time keep a fairly reserved attitude towards the film as a whole. This gives me a welcome, and rather unexpected, opportunity of discussing what I consider one of the most vital problems of the cinema. Amongst the film producers there is a general belief that real art is not a box-office asset or, at least, that the public would not admit quality of conception beyond a certain level. This belief has been, all along, a hindrance in the evolution of films.

After stating this, the producers are eager enough to call on the distributors for confirmation. The latter has the most determined opinion on the matter, for not only he, or his company, owns the cinemas, but (although we buy a ticket to get in) he seems to own the public as well: we are "his public." And because we are "his public," he professes to foresee every one of our reactions on a picture, a star, or even a "genre." It seems unbelievable, but it is true that the bulk of mass-observation, as it is called now, in the film shows is done entirely by this single man, owner or manager. He doesn't bother very much about it, either. And yet, he has no contempt for "his public." On the contrary he is naturally inclined to adorn us with all his tastes—and distastes.

Being only an individual, of a determined class, with, let us say, a limited culture, his judgment on our exceedingly complex body

'The Life of Emile Zola' (*Warner Brothers*)

—the public—is fallacious. For one thing, he doesn't go in and sit with us in the dark . . . If he did so, he would soon realise how easily the opinions, of which he feels he is so certain, cease to exist there. Mine do. So do those of my charwoman, who is sitting not far away. Because no possible difference of class or race could change the fact that the public, in a cinema, doesn't *reason*. It *feels*.

Chaplin was one of the first to acknowledge it.

But instead of following Chaplin's example, the producers seem to rely on their own judgment backed by those of the distributors.

Together, they have established a certain amount of box-office tenets; and these have become sacred. For them, to be a film-producer is, above all, to be a box-office expert.

Publicity was used, by both producers and distributors, to prove how right they were. It grew so quickly that it became not only an institution in itself, but a sort of symbol of their power.

Its main result was to upset for ever the little sense of criticism that the public ever had. With lots of publicity to back up its box-office qualities, a film is bound to make a great deal of money. Money is what producers are after. And money, again, is what distributors were invented for.

Flaherty is quite astonishing on the subject —his accounts of certain discussions on *Moana*, before its launching in U.S.A., as the *Love Life in the South Seas*, would make a most enlightening chapter, if he ever writes his memoirs. He confesses that he was so impressed by the arguments heard that he has felt ever since that the best film in the world could not survive unless some box-office angle was not found for its showing. Without it, the distributors would never believe in it.

In *Moana's* time people made films and then found the publicity for them. Now people seem to make films for no other reason than the publicity value.

And it is here that our case of *The Life of Emile Zola* can be brought back into the discussion. It is a film representing the last word in production skill of to-day. As well as the admirable performance of Paul Muni, photography, sound, direction, sets and costumes are first rate. And yet, beneath all this brilliance, the conception of the film itself seems to remain the same as that of a rather naïve and—may I say it?—a rather out-of date melodrama.

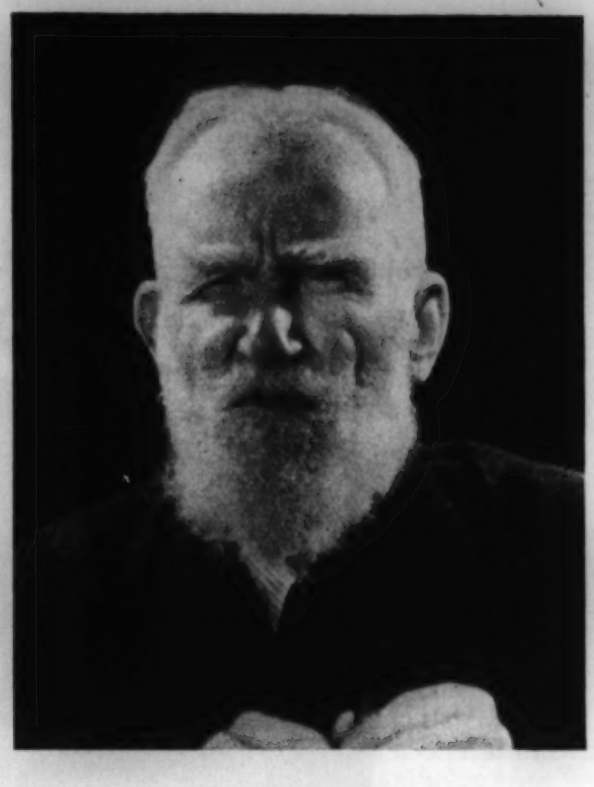
And *The Life of Emile Zola* is not the only one. The content of the films seem to remain invariably stationary while their technique progresses steadily.

Nobody will ever convince me that a much less conventional conception of the fight for realism by Zola and his friends, in the early part of the film, could have diminished its great box-office value. As it is, all the talent of Muni's performance seems considerably wasted in serving conventionality, when it could have been used, instead, to convey a much deeper and (pardon me) a much more dramatic notion, that of the realist revolution. I believe that this "feeling" of the audience would then have been used for the imbibing of a much higher, and socially useful, truth.

GRIMALDI is DEAD

Why not bury him?

asks GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



THE Christmas Pantomime, being our most fantastic and fairylandish form of theatrical art, should never be allowed to get into a groove; yet there is no sort of public entertainment that has been more hopelessly stuck in a groove for a century past.

It is just a hundred years since the death of the great Joey Grimaldi, who created a sort of clown peculiar to himself, as Dundreary was peculiar to Sothern, Robert Macaire to Frederic Lemaitre, or as the screen tramp is to Charlie Chaplin.

Now nothing in the theatre is more tiresome and futile than attempts by later actors to reproduce these idiosyncratic masterpieces. Sham Chaplins are not in the least funny, no matter how industriously they work the bowler hat, the little cane, and the shuffling gait. Sham Dundrearys are only silly; and sham Grimaldis are the worst of all stage impostures because they have spoiled so many pantomimes.

I HAVE seen dozens of them; and not one has amused me since I was a very small child and thought it all real.

Once I saw a good pantaloon—one of the Hulines—but he discarded tradition and played gravely as an old marquis in a court dress of extreme elegance.

Grimaldi (from "Popular Entertainments through the Ages")

I recall one brilliant harlequin, Teddy Royce, a first-rate burlesque actor and dancer. And I admit that a pantomime once kept me shrieking with laughter for half an hour and in thorough good humour for the rest of the evening. Its subject was "Sinbad the Sailor"; and what made me laugh so shamelessly was an outrageously vulgar exploitation of the humours of sea-sickness. The theatre was the Britannia in Hoxton; and the audience consisted mostly of 4,000 factory girls who threw boxes of sweets to their favourite performers and screamed frantically if they were picked up by the wrong person.

All the politer pantomimes have bored and disgusted me.

Sham Grimaldi was dying an intolerably slow death all the time.

"Peter Pan" was an attempt to get Christmas pieces out of their groove. "Androcles and the Lion" was another.

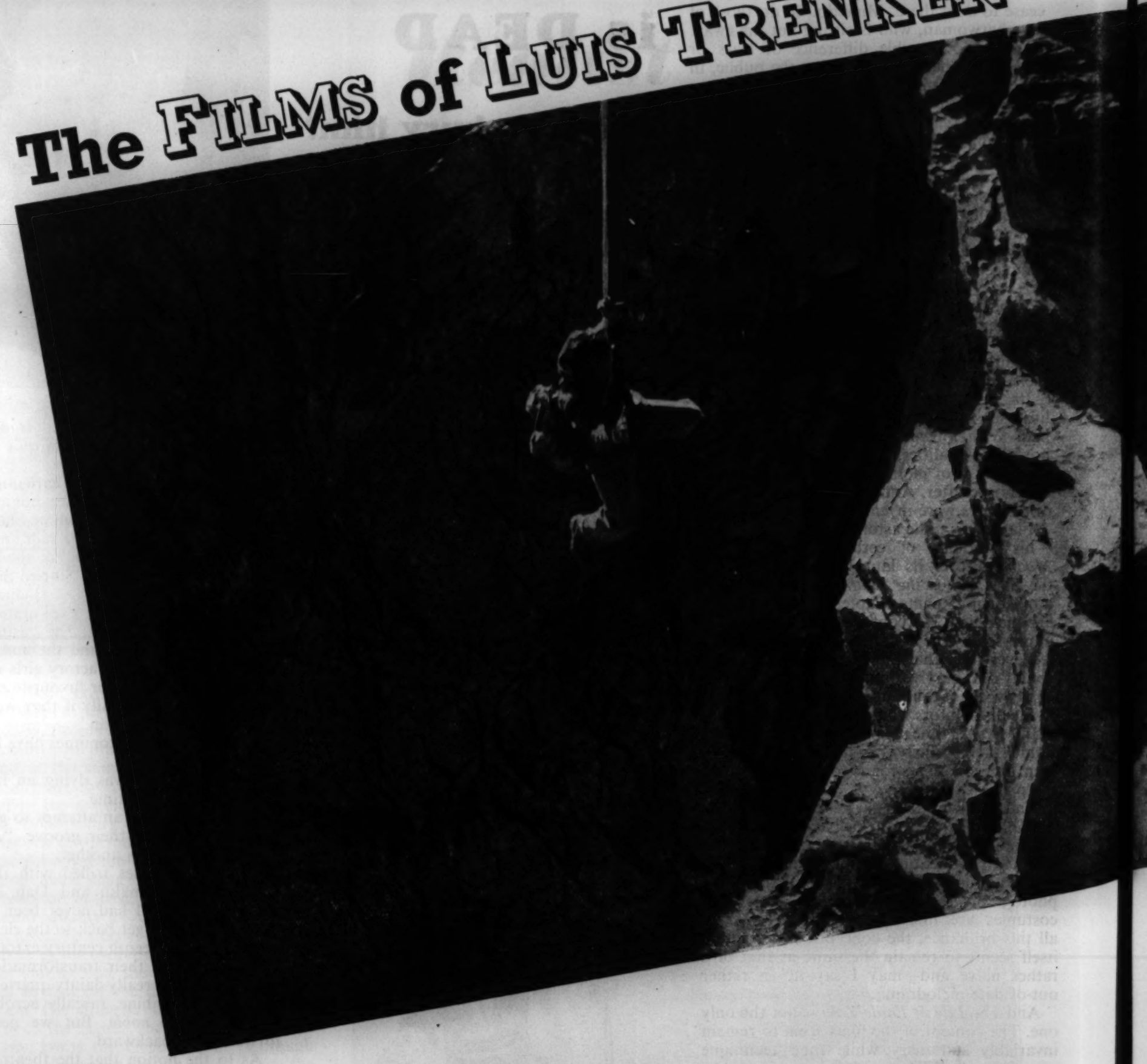
I have sometimes trifled with the notion that if only Grimaldi and Dan Leno and Herbert Campbell had never been born, we might be able to get back to the elegant fairy tales of the eighteenth century extravaganzas, with or without their transformation of the principals into a really dainty quartet of harlequin and columbine, rascally acrobat comedian and *père noble*. But we need to go forward, not backward.

As to the notion that the theatre has lost touch with the lives and problems of the man in the street, people would not write such nonsense if they could remember the theatre as it was when I was a beginner.

Do they really think that the plays of Mr. St. John Ervine, Mr. Priestley and Mr. Bridie are further from the lives and problems of our playgoers than the plays of Tom Taylor and the endless adaptations from the French which were the West End stock-in-trade fifty years ago? If so, they should have their pens taken away from them. Historical criticism is not their job.

(Article by courtesy of 'The Era')

The FILMS of LUIS TRENKER



THE film of the fresh-air seems to be rather in abeyance just now, with the studios of Germany vying with Hollywood in turning out ever grander and stuffier costume-dramas. It is pretty well left to the makers of the modern Western, who still seem to stumble on beauty as accidentally as the makers of the old Western; and, as far as art is concerned, solely to Luis Trenker.

But even if he had more company, Trenker would still be important. He would always stand apart from the other outdoor film men, because there is a purpose under his work.

If one had to "place" him in film history—never a grateful task, but we neat-minded critics like all our film figures to fit in somewhere—one would maintain that in spite of their widely different characters, he is the heir to Douglas Fairbanks. He typifies the poetry of human beings in motion. His films deal with the moving forces of Nature, wind, clouds, sun, avalanches; and with man as a similar force, as ski-er, climber, hunter. And, therefore, his films, like Fairbanks' early films, are essentially right as screen material. Like Fairbanks, and unlike most of the people now exposing celluloid, he is a legitimate figure of the film.

And here he is streets ahead of the other German film mountaineers. Fanck, for instance, quite apart from his contentment with idiotic plots, is rotted by a tendency to stand about and admire the scenery. Trenker moves in his scenery, and makes it move with him. In a film like *The Doomed Battalion*, the mountains act.

But Fairbanks was just magnificently coltish; he never expressed anything deeper than the joys of physical exercise. Trenker expresses a whole peasant morality and culture. His outlook and character have been moulded by one of the most original and

★ ★ ★

by

Elizabeth Coxhead

★ ★

independent races in Europe. And its culture is a real culture; the traveller will tell you how the eldest son of his Tyrolese inn was a world-famous doctor or a Prix de Rome, while the second was the boots. Trenker was a qualified architect before he began to make films; he speaks several languages perfectly, has written many books, has travelled and seen; but he remains an authentic peasant and mountaineer.

His message is, as you might expect, only half-articulate. He cannot put it into easy symbols or words. But in all his films it emerges: the ideal of comradeship. *We, as Austrians, as mountaineers, as villagers, as inhabitants of a tiny valley, must hold together and help each other against the ravages of man and the devil. . .* An essentially peasant idea, heroically narrow. We get it in the Kaiserjäger of *The Doomed Battalion*, in the students and Freischarler of *The Rebel*, in the woodcutters and guides of *The Lost Son*; he says himself:

"All that we do is a work of comradeship. As I love the free air and cannot endure the studio, so I love genuine and straightforward people, and hate the world of canvas and cardboard. In my work I have men about me who have now worked for me for many years. This idea of comradeship always springs up in my films."

And the War has given it a tragic intensity. Trenker is haunted by the War; and here again he typifies his race and generation. The mountains for him are full of ghosts. Here, he thinks, as he wanders among his own peaks, Hansl died, and here Fredl, and there young Otto was blown to pieces by a shell. . . . *The Doomed Battalion* is his own white-hot experience, and therefore his best and most coherent film. His own valley, the Grödnerthal, is lost to him. It is now the Val Gardena on the maps, but it is never so in his writings or in his heart. We to whom such things do not happen, can never understand the fervour or the bitterness of those to whom they do.

And because he tries to express the spirit of his people, Trenker wages a constant war against the temptation to insincerity. He goes in terror of being led into the artificial by his producers or his friends. For this reason he has struggled to make himself financially independent. He writes his own story, deliberately disregarding suggestions from outside; his enemies might hint that it is always the same story, and so it is, in the sense that it is always his own experience, but it is a story which in his own country, at any rate, can bear infinite repetitions. He does his own directing, associating himself with the best German technicians, and showing that technical conscientiousness which stamps all good German work. He acts his own chief part; but nothing annoys him more than the suggestion that he stars himself. He is a central but always an impersonal figure, a symbol, a type. When he loses the physical strength and grace for these parts, he will easily find some young Tyroler to do them equally well. But this intensely personal method of work—and no director, at the present moment, is so all-pervading in his films—is a natural development from his conception of the film as an art.

And when all is said, it is difficult to assess his work, even for someone to whom it has always given intense pleasure. It is like judging a whole nation, and nations are too big to be judged. Plainly, he is a terrific success in his own country, a popular hero; he stands for all that his people hold precious. Equally plainly, he will never be a great international figure, as Fairbanks was, because he is too deeply rooted in the traditions of a little race. In Hollywood, he is incongruous to the point of absurdity; not that his Hollywood visits have ever been more than mere interludes, to make the English dialogue for a film.

Equally he is incongruous at Denham, where he has been making interiors for *The Challenge*, a film dealing with Whymper's first ascent of the Matterhorn. The studio officials, friendly but puzzled, suggest that you can't expect a man to be quite normal who spends so much time on the tops of mountains. . . . Here, once again, another director is set over him, and dialogue is written in a language foreign to him; and one has misgivings that the film can't be truly his, as *The Doomed Battalion* was. But at any rate the Matterhorn will give satisfaction, and so will Trenker, lithe and enthusiastic as ever, and brown enough to shame their studio make-up. Five minutes spent talking to him and one is spiritually transported to the authentic Alpine hut.

Fairbanks was international partly because he was superficial; Trenker's roots go too deep for transplanting. He will never be more than a half-success, but he has qualities that no one else has, and that we all respond to. He brings to machine-suffocated audiences a breath of fresh air. He is the creature we had very nearly forgotten: man as a part of nature, man as an elemental force.

WHAT DO THEY SEEK?

WHAT about you, Mr. Lay? You're a farmer. What do you country people want from the cinema?

We don't often get the films we like. There is too much tragedy and we see enough of that in the village anyhow. Speaking as a countryman, village bred and born, I suggest that to appeal to us the plot must not be too complicated, or too quick in its movement. We like a little sentiment; the love element without the sex complex. We enjoy old-fashioned love tales; films that deal with every-day life of our English, Scotch, Welsh and Irish peoples, and with the "virtue rewarded" type of ending.

That doesn't sound as though the slick, sophisticated type of films would appeal to you?

No, I was born and have lived most of my life in a typical Bedfordshire village. I've seen many changes, gradual, but nevertheless real, in the customs, the habits and the outlook of village people. The cinema has come, like the motor-cars, the radio sets and many other wonderful innovations, and we are still rubbing our eyes with amazement. . . .

I asked our local blacksmith yesterday what appeal the cinema had for him. He answered ironically, with a sniff and a snigger—"I see enough living pictures every day from my shop door to satisfy me, and, anyhow, I see what is real and true, and to watch a film bores me, strikes me as unreal, artificial and just make-believe." Of course, country people do seek for some form of recreation and amusement at times. The theatre and music hall are, as a rule, beyond our purse, and so the cinema has been and is, a source of knowledge and amusement, but our attendance is occasional and not regular.

Do you think it has any lasting effect on your lives when you do go?

Yes, I imagine that seeing a film has a more lasting impression on a country person than it does on a town person. A few of our village lads and lasses do now and again contract a disease of the mind at the cinema—a disease that obscures or corrupts their natural, healthy outlook. There are some who spend too many hours each week at the cinema—(and some, by the way, will go into debt to do this). I have seen village lasses apeing to be film stars instead of learning better to become, what God probably meant them to be, the happy wife of a contented British workman. I do want to see films portray life from the best standards, not the worst. I want more educational films. Films should be made to show our traditional and historical episodes from the earliest times down to the present day, and also showing to-day the material progress of the countryside. How old-fashioned ideas and ways of dealing with the land are being superseded by up-to-date methods. I think this would be infinitely more interesting and amusing than some of the foreign trashy films whose attractions are so often just an exotic complex or mere gangsterisms.

All that sounds rather serious to me. I suppose you do like a comic now and again?

Yes, we all love the circus clown and the music-hall wise-cracker.

Wise-cracker! The films have made a difference to the countryman's speech then, even if they haven't made any difference to his behaviour!

Well, of course, we all learn a code of behaviour more or less from the films we see. But if they are of a high order the influence on behaviour will be good. It's a producer's privilege and duty to aim high, and not to pander to low tastes.

NOW what about you, Mr. Hargreaves? You live in a very different street. As a man who spends most of his time roundabout the West End—why do *you* go to the cinema?

It would be silly for me to say that I go to the cinema purely for entertainment. That isn't true because I've seen documentaries that I've enjoyed as much as the Silly Symphonies. I don't even mind being preached at in the cinema with a film like *Green Pastures*. But I do want a film to do its primary job, and that is to move. I hate films that just copy a successful play and keep to one scene all the time. I enjoy descriptive writings as much as anybody, but I believe that one picture is worth a column of story, and a good film can pack in so much more than a play. They used to say of Edmund Kean that to see him act was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning. I want the film to illuminate a scene, to range back through the centuries and show me people as they were, and as they lived; and to range over the world of to-day and to-morrow.

You always go to a West End cinema. That seems funny to me, when you can see the same film later on at a suburban cinema at half the price. Why not wait till they come round to these local cinemas—and see them cheaper?

Because, a new film, like a new play or a new opera for that matter, is news when it gets its first showing in the West End. I read a lot about films, I see most of the notes and the bulletins that are issued by the various film companies. I don't take them all literally, of course, but they do give you a hint, or a suggestion, of a new team, or an unusual theme, or the handling of a well-known star by a new director. Then sometimes one reads a usually hard-boiled critic who raves about a new film when it hits New York, and then you look out for it when it gets to the West End as you would for a new opera star. And there is, of course, this very decided advantage in seeing a film in the West End—you do see the uncut copy; some of the longer films are often cut down when they go on general release.

NOW, David, what does the modern schoolboy think about it all? When I was your age, I used to be able to get in for a penny on Saturday afternoons. My wife tells me she once got in for a ha-penny. And they gave her a bag of sweets as well. They were silent films then. All the sound we got came from a young lady at the piano—and *us*, of course. We used to shout a warning to the hero when the villain was creeping up behind him. But he never took any notice. There was a lot more movement in the old silent films. Especially the cowboy ones.

Yes, I like cowboy films.

I haven't seen any lately, but I'm told—now they've gone talkie—they put a lot more love in 'em. I've got a friend who's eleven and he says all this love-stuff spoils a cowboy film.

Yes, I agree with him. I don't like seeing a film with a soppy love story. There's too much of it.

He tells me he often prefers the films he sees at school. Educational films.

I like them in school when we have them, but I don't like them in a cinema; they bore me.

Why?

I don't know. When we're taken to the cinema from school and an educational film

In response to many requests, we print, by permission of the B.B.C., extensive extracts from the recently broadcast discussion on the audience and the cinema. The talk was led by Mr. Herbert Hodge, a taxi-driver, who makes the interpolations and the closing remarks. Others in order of speaking: Mr. H. C. Lay, a farmer; Mr. F. Buckley Hargreaves, a journalist; Master David Boswell, a schoolboy; Mr. S. C. Barrell, a film society member, and Mrs. Edna Thorpe, a housewife from a housing estate.

comes on, it just doesn't fit in. We might just as well be back at school. But I like travel films. We saw some of that on Wednesday in colour—fisher-folk in Cornwall transporting lime to London in old schooners, all done in colour.

What about thrillers?

I like any thriller. Last Wednesday, we saw *The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel* and about a month ago I saw *The General Died at Dawn*. I liked those two very much. I like historical films if they're exciting. I like gangster films, but I think I prefer *The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel*.

Talking of educational films, what about films about machines—do you dislike those?

No, I like mechanical films about inventions, and the ones about factories—you know *The Life History of a Pin*. I like those in the cinema.

Don't they take you back to school?

No. The sort of things we see at school are how a chick develops inside an egg, and all about plants.

Do you like cartoons?

I love Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck; I like all cartoons that make me laugh.

Do you prefer the coloured ones?

No, I like the black-and-white ones best; they're much funnier, I think.

What do you think about the effect of the cinema on boys? On their behaviour.

Well, I think it creates a terrific imagination. I mean the film which is very often thoroughly imaginative. I don't think otherwise it should have any effect. It's quite nice to go round in gangs with a toy pistol. I like it myself—or I used to. But I can't say I feel desperate after a desperate film. I mean, in a gangster film there's usually a hero that knocks down the gangsters, and most boys like to copy him and so there's not much harm in them.

What about these special performances for children that some cinemas put on; on Saturdays as a rule—what do you think of them?

I went once, just to see what it was like, but I didn't enjoy it much. They didn't have a very good programme; one was a cowboy, but there was rather a soppy love thing in it. I prefer to go to the ordinary performance.

Now, Barrell! I suppose, as a member of a film society, you see the cinema more as an art than a mere entertainment?

I think we all go to the cinema for the same thing; primarily for the same thing anyway; to get amusement or entertainment.

A film society programme will usually consist of a carefully selected feature film and supporting non-fictional films, with an occasional cartoon. Sometimes as much as fifty per cent of the programme will be documentary in nature. The feature film will usually be of the type shown by the repertory cinemas. Repertory cinemas draw on the existing stock of films, but they are always shown some time after they've had their general release. The films chosen are of a very high standard. The standard of public taste, to my mind, is higher at *all* cinemas than the pictures we get, and the cinema people think we want.

Why is it twenty million people go every week?

So many people go to pass the time. Ordinary people who go twice a week to their local cinema, whatever they are showing, use no discrimination at all. . . .

We haven't heard the woman's point of view yet. Is it so very different from the man's, Mrs. Thorpe?

Speaking as a housewife, I find a seat at the cinema one of the easiest and cheapest ways of getting a change from the daily round. It brings interest, amusement, education, almost to our door at prices to suit nearly everybody.

That sounds as though you're perfectly satisfied.

I wish I could always feel like that, but there are still times when we're offered the not-so-good picture. I know we're getting more first-class films. We have more real, sincere films based on themes which once no producer would have tackled, and thank goodness, most of us appreciate these good things. At other times, as I say, we have only average programmes to choose from. Mind you, when the main attraction is less than an epic, the supporting programme often includes something interesting in the way of a travel or documentary film.

You do like travel and documentary films then? Most men I've talked to seem to think a tired housewife wants sheer relaxation.

Not many of us go to the pictures with a conscious desire to be instructed. We probably enjoy the painless education when we get there, but our first wish is to be amused or interested by some aspect of life which seems different from our own. Perhaps we've been spoiled. When you compare early films with modern productions, it's amazing. Cinema managers might well say we want too much, considering that they offer three hours' entertainment at a time.

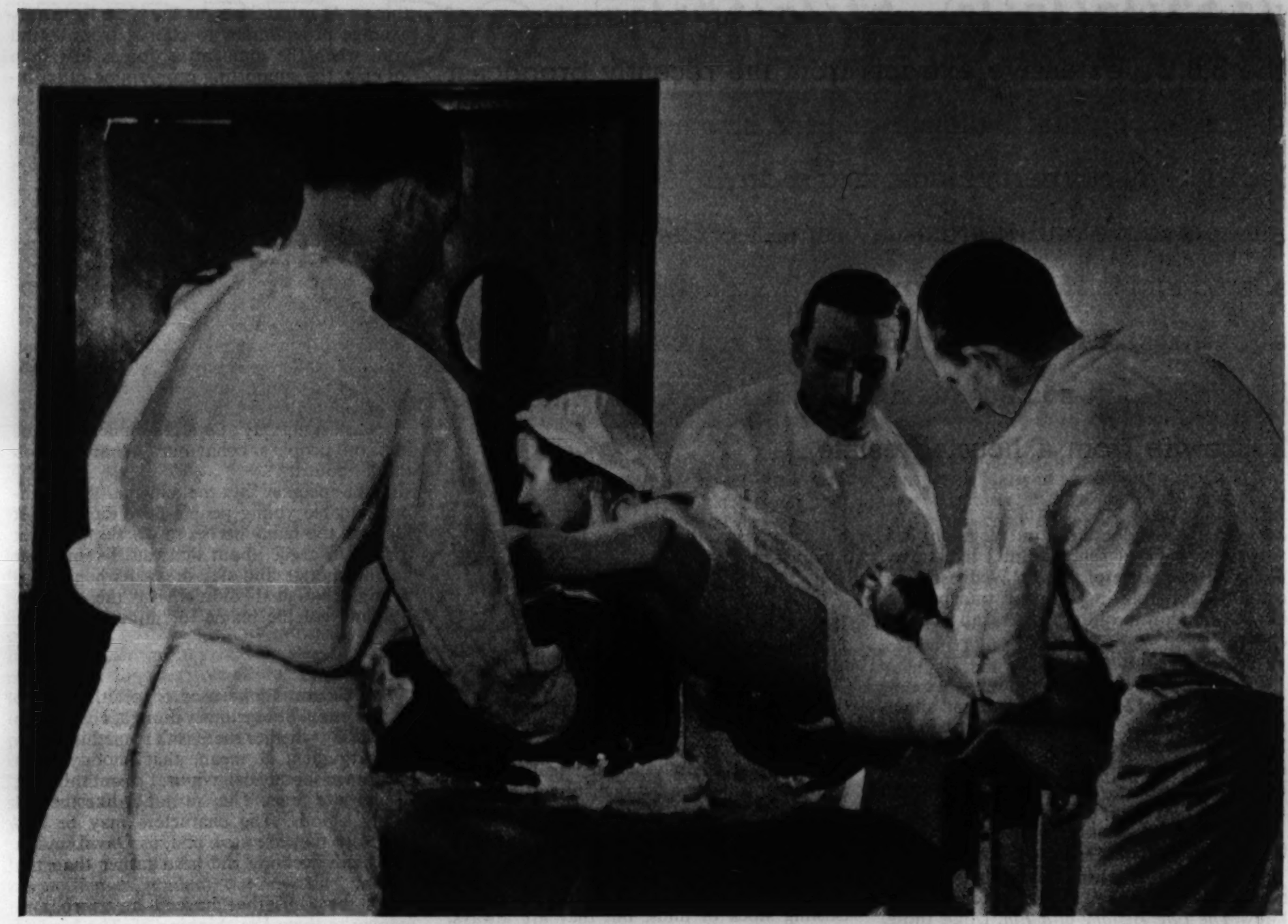
I was asking Lay about the influence of the film on people's behaviour. What do you think about it?

Some people say the cinema gives impressionable young people false ideas about life, and too many heroes to worship. It's not for me to argue about that, but I remember having moods and day-dreams when I was young, though I didn't visit the cinema. Reading got the blame for mine.

Yes! Sexton Blake used to get the blame for mine! But seriously though, I can't help wondering whether there isn't something in it. The argument, I mean, that shoddy films encourage shoddy behaviour. I'm not thinking of gangster films. They're rather like the old penny bloods. The characters may be *bad* men. But they are *men*, and, as David said, a boy tends to copy the hero rather than the villain.

It's the films that haven't any men and women in them I'm thinking of. The kind of film that makes heroes and heroines out of the most useless members of society. The so-called bright young things. The smart set; and where people who *do* work for their living are shown as either feeble-minded or not quite nice.

That kind of film, it seems to me, can have a bad effect on people's behaviour. Especially on young people whose only window on the world is the cinema. Mind you, I think the films are getting better in this respect. The Americans have been giving us a few clerks and mechanics and peasants for heroes lately. And a few heroines who are living women instead of pegs to hang pretty clothes on. But the film directors still seem to be a bit nervous about it. I was reading about a Hollywood director the other day, who said he was afraid he'd rather spoiled his last film by being too honest about life. "The public," he said, "isn't ready for an excess of honesty just yet." I don't know about an *excess* of honesty. But I think we could safely stand a slightly increased dose of it. A few more films like *The Good Earth* and *Make Way for Tomorrow* and Chaplin's *Modern Times*. I'd like to see their *British* counterparts, too. We've had some good films about upper-class British life. But I'd like to see more about my own sort, the three-or-four pounds a week people. . . .



SEARLE'S film *War without End* is very well photographed, directed on clean, straightforward lines and neatly assembled. In addition, it presents that most dramatic of subjects—the inside of a hospital. Hence, the material carries the director, rather than the director creating the material, but it carries him quite a long way because he has treated it intelligently. I always remember the old Hippodrome revues, in which gigantic stage spectacles, revolving settings, magical lighting, and a huge chorus forming rhythmic patterns, created an impressive background for a leading lady to step out and sing a refrain in an almost inaudible voice. Then the spectacle continued, the chorus slaved, the lights did their stuff, and finally the curtain descended, and, believe it or not, the leading lady came before them and bowed to terrific applause—taking all the credit for that astounding piece of stagecraft. That is an interesting simile which all documentalists should remember, for whether they are dealing with operations, railway trains or power stations, they are relying, perhaps unconsciously, on the natural action of the material being shot, thereby allowing their creative ability to lie dormant.

War without End begins with an impressive procession of nurses and students, and then presents one of those fragmentary prologues of little bits and pieces, unrelated, to allow the commentator to introduce the subject. Following that is a rather too hurried survey of medical history, pioneers' photographs being superimposed over the turning pages of an old volume. The most interesting information given regarding the achievements of such men as Pasteur is too brief, and the commentary scampers after the images in vain. Thereafter, however, a leisurely tempo is established, and the picture is noteworthy for its revealing close-ups, its dignified commentary, and its excellent music. An operation is seen, or rather not seen, for the censor turned surgeon and made some big cuts. But to bridge the gap so created, Searle superimposed a clock over the patient's face, and the sequence is presented in complete silence, which is most effective. I understand that the Censor eliminated the operation because it was, from his point of view, 'sacred'.

It seems a pity to me that all the things which people need most are invariably too sacred to present to them. Christ is usually kept off the screen because He is sacred—instead of being presented on every possible occasion simply because He is sacred. All constructive attempts to create Peace which must necessarily be opposed to the diabolical methods of the Constitution are barred, presumably because they too are—sacred?—No, they come under the heading of sacrilege, which amounts to the same thing if prohibited from the public screen.

Now an operation is sacred. Admittedly, it is neither pleasant, nor entertaining, but, in some circumstances it is necessary, just as the Censor is, to prohibit dirt and encourage intelligence, but judging by the extremely questionable and suggestive material which finds its way into the cinema, and the absence of subjects which seek to create a finer civilization—his tactics are hard to understand.

By the simple method of fading in and out, various dissimilar subjects are presented—the wonders of X-Ray, and the record of a beating heart—fractures—teeth—eyes. Then a dramatic sequence dealing with diabetic kiddies, and their dependence on insulin, and special foods. Cancer, too, is dealt with boldly

WAR WITHOUT END

An impressive procession of doctors and nurses, the wonders of X-ray, writhing cancer germs, the brave work of doctors who try out new apparatus on themselves; these and other sequences from Francis Searle's new film are discussed by Andrew Buchanan.

and the most powerful X-Ray high tension apparatus yet made is shown—the patient being in touch with the controller by microphone. A close-up of cancer germs writhing about is an important insert, but there is not sufficient emphasis given to the wise words that prevention is better than cure. Here are cures in plenty, but what I always think when confronted with wonders of medical science is—why not try to make them as unnecessary as possible by enlightening the masses on how to live wisely instead of permitting millions to eat and drink what they like without knowledge?

Massage follows, and exercises by a team of girls—nervous diseases, and the brave work of doctors who try out new apparatus on themselves, and lastly an aerial ambulance is clearly dealt with. To terminate the film, we see a meeting of the Directors of King Edward's Hospital Fund in Old Jewry, with H.R.H. the Duke of Kent in the chair. This is a silent sequence, though those present are talking, and the effect is not improved by the inclusion of a still photograph of the King. I can never understand why it is not made easier for film-makers to secure first class films of the Royal Family, instead of permitting only stills or hurriedly snatched shots in all weathers for newsreels. Surely it is due to posterity that all eminent personalities should be recorded in picture and sound by the finest technicians obtainable.

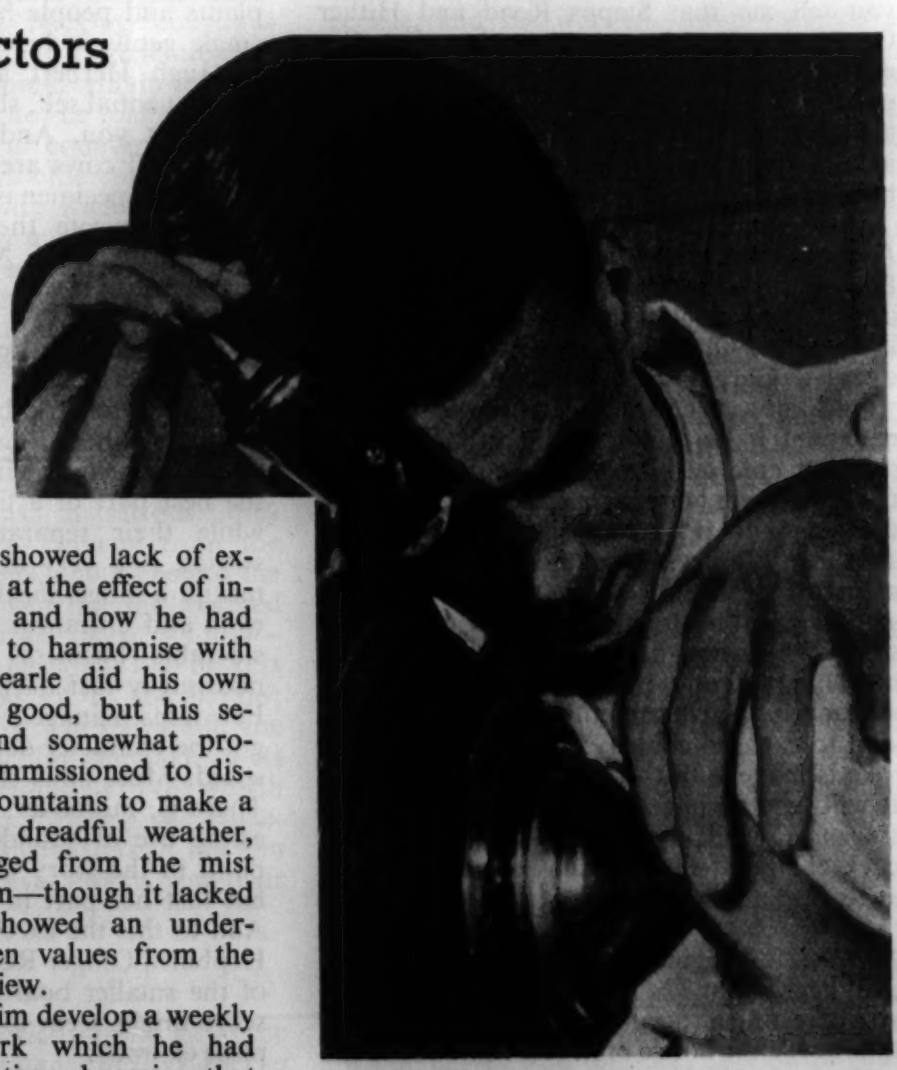
The film ends by reverting to the turning pages of the old volume, and the original procession of nurses and students—a suitable finale. The length is about 2,500 feet, so that it was an achievement to condense such a lot of detail of so exacting a nature into a compact space like that. It must have been difficult work shooting in wards and small rooms—and yet I feel there are numerous opportunities for ingenious treatment which Searle has not grasped. This fact, plus the absence of continuity—that is, the constant fading from one subject to another, categorises the film as a nice, neat technical job, marking a definite step forward for Searle, but when he steps, it must not be into the darkness. That is why, in encouraging him, I have emphasised the difference between creating a film, and making the best of one which is based on material that is, in itself, vital.

A few years ago I viewed some shorts Searle had made, which illustrated certain songs played on an organ. He had produced them privately, without any resources, and although the assembling showed lack of experience, I was surprised at the effect of ingenious synchronisation, and how he had captured suitable images to harmonise with the music and lyrics. Searle did his own camerawork which was good, but his sequences were uneven and somewhat prolonged. Then he was commissioned to disappear into the Welsh mountains to make a sheep-farming picture in dreadful weather, and he ultimately emerged from the mist with quite a creditable film—though it lacked essential polish, and showed an underdeveloped sense of screen values from the entertainment point of view.

I was then able to aid him develop a weekly documentary series—work which he had hankered after for some time, knowing that the ceaseless production of a variety of subjects forms the finest training ground possible.

To produce in two days, say, a pictorial analysis of wireless telephony; the evolution of a tiddler; a mannequin parade, and a packet of swing music, is not easy if one is a methodical craftsman—and Searle managed to carry out the huge task well, for remember a specialist desires more than anything to specialise. But by specialising I do not wish to see Searle develop one of those one-way minds, with a complete absence of humour, which characterises so many documentalists. Searle has not yet had an opportunity of handling fictional situations, and so he has not experienced the difficulties of creating dramatic and comedy sequences out of real life. Instead, he has been given the opportunity of making a film about hospitals which he has done well—but, for several reasons—the picture offers no criterion of what he can or cannot do in the future, though it reveals him to be a most careful and painstaking technician. Why is it no criterion? Why do so many documentalists make successful films without creating anything? Merely because the material is ready-made, and, in itself, impressive. Even if filmed and assembled poorly, some subjects can hold an audience, simply because the material is of vital interest.

There are so very few men with determination and ability to overcome the difficulties which the film industry has created within itself that I, for one, welcome all signs of progress made by newcomers, but let them learn to regard the screen, not merely as a mirror to reflect life as it really is, but as a blank canvas upon which they may paint their individual interpretations of actuality.



Pictures from "War Without End."

WHAT, NO

WELLS FARGO, a Paramount film, directed by Frank Lloyd, with Joel McCrea, Bob Burns, Frances Dee and Lloyd Nolan.

THE PERFECT SPECIMEN, a Warner Brothers' film, directed by Michael Curtiz, with Errol Flynn, Joan Blondell, Hugh Herbert, Edward Everett Horton and May Robson.

STAGE DOOR, an RKO-Radio film, directed by Gregory La Cava, with Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Adolphe Menjou, Gail Patrick and Andrea Leeds.

Reviewed by John Grierson

THIS month has been all fairy tale. *Wells Fargo*, *Stage Door*, *The Perfect Specimen:* each in its kind is an exercise in the faraway. Take *Wells Fargo* for example. There was a day when we got some zingo with our epics of the West. When the covered wagons had finished their bloody deviations with the Indians, the first snowflakes fell on the receding caravan to herald yet another chapter in the adventure. The first sod was cut in the virgin soil to turn a fantasy into a fact. Epic meant something. It meant to tap root into time and the realities and importance took the cardboard figures of fiction and made them figures in history.

Wells Fargo has no excuse for not getting something of this larger bearing into its story of the birth of American Transport. Hollywood has done this sort of thing so often and so brilliantly during the past fifteen years that it should be relatively easy now to catch the magic of space, infuse the zest of the frontier and pile up the weight of primitive events. Here the story gets indoor among the women and is done for. There is a dreadful lot of bothering about the best girl back home, and the sweat that breaks out on the film's sentimental forehead over the birth of a child is like a panic in suburbia. No breeding of frontiersmen here and no frontiersmen either.

"Why didn't you come in time?" says the wife to a husband who is only supposed to have been three or four thousand miles across the Rockies and back; and she turns her pettish little face to the wall. And the hard-boiled hero of these decadent days gets down on his knees and sobs for ten minutes of shameless apology. You might be anywhere between Stepps Road and Hither Green. If you tell me that Stepps Road and Hither Green are the pillars, and apology the *élan vital* of civilization, I shall believe you, but poor *Wells Fargo*. With all this skulking on the job laid end to end, it is only your woman's idea of epic. A perfect bevy of births and the birth of American Transport nowhere.

How pleasant to have alongside *Wells Fargo* at the Carlton the more virile antics of Popeye and the Forty Thieves. Can you imagine our noble Popeye slobbering on his knees while Olive Oil, the unloved one, produces a Gargantuan Junior. I doubt if he would know and I should rejoice to hear his comment if he did. In the *Forty Thieves*, a superior epic on all counts, he certainly has the lady doing her appropriate piece of desert trudging and no mercy shown. I have not seen many Popeyes recently and the development of the sotto voce in this one came as something of a surprise. It helps Popeye considerably for now he can, very properly, keep his Olympian mutterings to himself. It seems, moreover, to give something of a new dimension to cartoon comedy. Time and again the joke is made with the mumble or the mutter. It will be only just if this second voice which Eugene O'Neil invented for tragedy, Hitchcock chained to melodrama, turns out to be at its brightest and best in slapstick.

I CANNOT imagine anyone specially anxious to hear about *The Perfect Specimen* but it is so interesting a social case that one had better take academic notice of it. It is right out of the early days of Richard Dix and Lois Wilson—those happy days before the slump when there were no economics to spoil the perfect romance. The young millionaire may be something of a prig but get him out into the world, blood him in brotherhood with the commonalty, find him the right girl, and be sure he has a heart of gold. I shall not try to explain why Hollywood should believe that rich young men have hearts of gold but it ardently does. Mr. Deeds was another variant of the myth, and a cunning one. He was really, you remember, a poor man and only happened to be rich by accident and you couldn't blame him for it. In the slump you had to be careful. Audiences were looking carefully at their rich young men and hearts of gold were under suspicion, and Mr. Deeds had to be dressed up with an economic theory before he was permitted to pass. But these unfortunate shadows have gone. *The Perfect Specimen* is not called upon like Mr. Deeds to placate the hungry mob. Time rolls back to 1924 and with a couple of odd gestures to hard work, our millionaire graduates with honours. I hope you will appreciate as I did the confidence of the atmosphere. Slip back 15 years and you are young again. Better still, slip back 40 or 50 years, and you are not even born. Already one sees the bicycle made for two edging over the horizon. And so what? we asked a couple of years ago. And so Victoria! they answer.

There are three brilliant passages in *The Perfect Specimen* and they all quite rightly record the activities of madmen. There is the study of a Garage Proprietor who like a brahmin has passed beyond the material world, invents crazy contraptions for doing nothing in particular, and ignores money. There is the Professor so absent-minded that plants and people have become species of a single genus in his muddled memory. There is Hugh Herbert as his own brilliant inconsequential self, slapping his face out of the moon at you. And why not? In a lunatic asylum all cows are black. Errol Flynn who plays the Specimen is a good man gone wrong. He once wrote the story of his sea-going adventures on the Australian coast and very genuine stuff it was.

Stage Door is already booked by a half a dozen critics as a masterpiece and it is certainly a remarkably directed description of a theatrical boarding house. Keeping a dozen young women flowing in a single stream for the best part of a film, and maintaining the while their separate little characters and stories, is a very difficult feat in cinema. It means a huge ingenuity in the shaping of exits and entrances and the still more considerable business of holding the central necessarily fast narrative through the detail. Few films manage it. *Dead End*, for example, got the character detail, but lost its narrative speed. Most films shy away from the detail. There is, moreover, in *Stage Door* an interesting use of sound and particularly at the point in the story where the young girl who has lost her part in a play commits suicide. Add to this the excellent acting of Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, and quite a number of the smaller boarding house parts and the score might seem to be good for the masterpiece claimed.

Why is it not? The fact is there is something theatrical and light weight about the whole business. Here we have the story of youth, ambition, and disillusion in the great city. Evidently someone took it seriously for there is the sound band of suicide and there are the antics of tragedy. I don't know, but I wouldn't say there was real pity or that the tear was genuine.

NO SPINACH ?

SOUTH RIDING, a London Films' picture, directed by Victor Saville, with Edna Best, Ralph Richardson, Edmund Gwenn, John Clements, Ann Todd and Marie Lohr.

IT'S LOVE I'M AFTER, a Warner Brothers' film, directed by Archie L. Mayo, with Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, Olivia de Havilland and Eric Blore.

LA GRANDE ILLUSION, a French film, directed by Jean Renoir, with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin and Dita Parlo.

Reviewed by Basil Wright

South Riding is an amazing mix-up. Some of it is so good, so vivid, so analytical even, that one can hardly believe that other sequences, reminding us so redundantly how bad British films were in 1925, are by the same hand. Dickens of course used to produce the same sort of muddle, but he at least did it on a vast scale of unashamed and unshameable vulgarity, infinitely preferable to the refined nonsense of this film's finale, with girl guides and nurses and scouts and fire-brigades and aldermen and Ralph Richardson and Edna Best and the County all singing "Land of Hope and Glory" in a fantastic synthesis of René Clair and a newsreelman's nightmare. They can fly all the little Union Jacks they like in the wide open spaces of Denham, in fact, I will lend them mine as well, provided they will realise that you can't mix slop and slapstick with a number of sequences which do at least infuse a sense of reality into the problems and politics of a small Yorkshire town, and are in general more worthy of the team which produced *Storm in a Teacup*.

My reading being strictly confined to Runyon and Wodehouse, I cannot estimate how much of the Holtby book has got across into the screen version; but when the film is being serious and sensible it has all the air of being a good adaptation and a first class job of scripting. Ian Dalrymple can be relied on for that sort of thing—but, once again, why the mix-up? It happens not merely from sequence to sequence, but actually inside a single shot—witness the interview between the schoolgirl and the headmistress, which begins in the purest vein of naturalism and suddenly degenerates into a banal unreality scented with a whiff of Angela Brazil.

Maybe we should smother our protests in gratitude for a film which builds its personal stories round the problem of a housing estate; that at least is refreshing. The small-town councillors are often well-portrayed—notably by John Clements as the milk-minded Socialist (with hacking cough)—but then again they tend to degenerate into the hypocritical serio-comic villain of Edmund Gwenn (you need not be told his name is 'Oogins). There is a counter-plot—the story of the decline of ye olde country mansion, with true-blue Squire Richardson supporting (on a mortgage) a lunatic wife in a Home of Rest. And the schoolmistress (Edna Best) acts as a go-between on the two plots, scrapes through the bad stuff more easily than any other of the cast, and gets her man in the end.

What is it all about really? Did anyone on the production ever make up their mind? If it was to be farce, they had no business to be serious about slums; if serious, they should have taken their comedy from the actual smalltown elements, and eschewed the artificial slap-and-tickle which never breathed the air of a genuine market place. As it is—well, if you put all your eggs into two baskets you'll have to send the lot to the curate; that's all they're good for. On the whole, the film had better be seen, for the sake of its good moments, which remind us of the wealth of indigenous excellence awaiting the purse-proud and cosmopolitan masters of the film world, if and when they ever awake from their dream of fair women.

WHY did we allow Eric Blore to go to the States? His performance in *It's Love I'm After* is one of the most beautifully conceived pieces of comedy acting possible. As a gentlemen's gentleman (with a strong desire to be a cad's cad) he has one sublime scene in which his talent for bird imitation (his Golden Oriole still rings in my delighted ears) is used to warn his master against love-making in the solitude of a garden; unfortunately the scene of operation is next to a large aviary, and in the ensuing moments Blore fights a losing battle as a lone interrupter of this vast Parliament of Fowls. Bless him: he is the lifeblood of this film, which also happens to star Leslie Howard (quite rightly sticking to comedy nowadays) and Bette Davis, who can act. The best idea of the film is the opening scene, in which Howard and Davis conduct a vicious but sotto voce quarrel during the death scene from "Romeo and Juliet." Of its kind *It's Love I'm After* is good—but the monotony makes it difficult to decide whether it really is duller than, say, *Love is News* or whether the time is merely out of joint.

IF *La Grande Illusion* is not great, it is not because it was made by a bad director. It is in every sense remarkable, and should on no account be missed by anyone interested in cinema or in the psychology of war. But—and it is a difficult "but"—there is a fundamental error. The story is good—a story of prison camps in Germany, of efforts to escape, of suspense, failure, suspense, success—all the elements in fact of good cinema. The theme is even more striking—the effect of war conditions on class distinctions. We see how, in the prison camps, the aristocrats, the bourgeoisie, and the workers group themselves, not according to nationality, but according to their class. We see the aristocrats—German von Rauffenstein, Gallic de Boeldieu; the bourgeois—Lieutenent Marechal, ex-mechanic, and Rosenthal, wealthy Jew; we see the nameless and innumerable ciphers of the "lower classes"—navvy or docker or peasant, all drifting into their own closed circle, and only prevented from making a complete class cosmos by the extra class distinction superimposed by war—the distinction between officers and men. United by the desire to escape, officers wield the secret shovel regardless of rank in civilian life—but there is a fundamental gulf between de Boeldieu and his fellow officers.

War—the great leveller. Yet why are we uneasy when de Boeldieu sacrifices his life to make good the escape of Marechal and Rosenthal? Why do we feel that the film has unwittingly taken on a fascist expression? It is not what Renoir meant—quite the reverse. But it is very nearly what he actually says.

The solution is, I think, that Renoir has tried to say in film what could only be said in a long novel. The details of characterisation are missing. Rauffenstein and de Boeldieu will either remain enigmas (which they should not) or will be misunderstood (which is what actually happens). But the traditions, the long aristocratic corridors of time at the end of which they now appear, neat in their white gloves and sightless monocles—these we must imagine, if we can. And it is a bad thing to leave so much to the imagination.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

The Hurricane

(John Ford—United Artists.)
Dorothy Lamour, Jon Hall, Mary Astor, C. Aubrey Smith.

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Hollywood is the place where a $2,000,000 production can't be put over without spending an additional $40,000 or more for a one-night send-off. *The Hurricane* opened under a barrage of electrical glory the like of which I have never seen. The Carthay Circle was ablaze with diamonds, ermine, flashlight bulbs, newsreels, lipstick, and faces alert for the occasion. With cold-blooded evaluation, the master of ceremonies seeded the "big names" from the escorts and less-celebrated companions and whisked them to the microphone. The less important the name, the longer the speech. The longer the speech, the louder the orchestra. On and in the stars came, speaking their little pieces, smiling and waving to friends and foes; finally staggering into the darkened theatre, which by now *reeked* with various expensive perfumes.

There, I must say, *The Hurricane* came into its own. After the carefully calculated applause that greeted the credits—the ratio ran the gamut from Goldwyn (100%) to special effects cameraman (approximately 15%)—I thought I could give myself over to the picture. But no. As each player appeared for the first time on the screen, fresh applause. *Now*, I thought, the long-awaited moment has arrived. I am to see *The Hurricane*. In utter quiet (coughs no longer disturb me) the audience and I watched the island people assume character, we watched luxurious scenes of South Seas revelry and native life. We felt the impact of an approaching doom. We served with Terangi his wretched prison sentence, and escaped breathlessly each time with him. We saw a stupendous build-up of South Sea hurricane horror—first the rattling shutters and flickering candles, then a rapidly rising sea, an angry wind. Houses collapsed, trees were uprooted, the sea became a mountain of fury and foam, sweeping over the pitiable island as though it were a toy.

Hollywood is the place where, at a moment like this, audiences clap. I was catapulted back into a perfume-ridden orchestra section with brutal haste. I shivered. I tried to believe again the miracles being performed by Hollywood's cast and Hollywood's minute men, but I couldn't. So I cried. I got the credit of being tremendously moved by *The Hurricane*. I don't know. I was rudely interrupted from one of the most impressive excursions into illusion that I have ever experienced. The denouement of *The Hurricane* served admirably for nose-powdering through the house.

Hollywood is the place where *The Hurricane* will be praised in the *most* lavish terms. It is where a première will be held next week, the entire ceremony repeated, and audiences will audibly indulge their approval once more. There is a place where pictures should be made and not seen. Hollywood is the place.

—Katharine Best, *Stage*

Edited by
H. E. BLYTH

Dorothy Lamour and Jon Hall

The hurricane, magnificent as it is, devours only about fifteen minutes of *Hurricane*, and there are long minutes earlier when the footage is merely being nibbled away. Oliver H. P. Garrett and Dudley Nichols, who did the adaptation, have moved leisurely into Nordhoff's and Hall's South Seas variation of *Les Miserables*. They have introduced the tale of Terangi *versus* the French Government with a shade too much emphasis upon the pastoral.

But the hurricane is one to blast you from the orchestra pit to the first mezzanine. It is a hurricane to film your eyes with spindrift, to beat at your ears with its thunder, to clutch at your heart and send your diaphragm vaulting over your floating rib into the region just south of your tonsils. The hurricane, in a good old movie word, is terrific. Palms are torn up by their roots and go swinging clumsily through howling space; coral reefs are torn apart and fling their jagged fragments against a defenceless beach; great combers surge over the land and engulf men and women whose screams of terror are in pantomime, mocked to silence by the howling rage of the wind. If this is make-believe, nature must make the best of it; she has been played to perfection.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

I doubt whether sound newsreels of an actual hurricane could have been any more sensational or hair-raising. The theatre seemed to sway under the powerful impact of twisting wind and crashing sea. The Earthquake effects in the film *San Francisco* takes on the character of a baby rattling a dish, compared to the remarkable co-ordination of sound, and imagery in *Hurricane*. The only phony part about the business is that while the upheaval took the lives of practically all the natives on the island, it lovingly spared every single one of the seven principal white actors. I have examined the cast and have found that not one of the chief players lost as much as a collar-button in the calamitous event. The fact is there was a purpose behind the hurricane. It just didn't happen for no reason. It came specifically as a warning that natives, living under the flag of Britain and France, cannot strike white men and get away with it.

—David Platt, *American Sunday Worker*

Critical Summary

James Basevi, the special effects man who was responsible for the earthquake sequence in "San Francisco" and the locust swarms in "The Good Earth", has now surpassed himself with his scenes of tornado and destruction in "The Hurricane." At least it seems that those sadly overworked adjectives "stupendous", "sensational" and "colossal" for once provide an accurate estimate of what they seek to publicize. Mr. Basevi's hurricane is, undeniably, colossal and stupendous. It probably cost a great deal, but we should not blame Hollywood for doing such things on a big scale; they provide, after all, real film material, for here, above all else, is action and movement, and if sound is used, it is sound allied to action, not just talk. Moreover earthquakes and hurricanes are the especial province of the cinema, for these are things which the stage can never hope to imitate. And Hollywood, which seems to exaggerate almost everything, is yet probably only outdone in broadness of conception by Nature herself; one has only to look at the Mediterranean to realise that the sea is just that ridiculously vivid sort of blue that Technicolor has always made it out to be, only a bit more so.

Wells Fargo

(Frank Lloyd—Paramount.)
Joel McCrea, Frances Dee, Bob Burns.

Paramount, as recently recorded, have "gone west" with fervour. In this biography of the "Carter-Paterson" of the trails of '49, Mr. Zukor has produced what some will regard as the grandest of frontier sagas. Wells Fargo began by beating the official mail service to the frontier towns. Then, becoming more ambitious, they put civilisation into a stage coach and carried it 2,600 miles to California, when the gold boom was starting and the covered wagons advanced surely and yet more surely into the unknown. It is worth noting that the pioneers were mainly British—Scotch for the most part. Almost any drama of western conquest is an epic of British effort. We shall never see their like again. Before we round the trail into the future, let us turn and wave a hand to them.

—G. A. Atkinson, *The Sunday Referee*

Mr. Wells and Mr. Fargo were business partners of a century ago, when to travel to or communicate with Buffalo from New York was a startling and hazardous enterprise. But Mr. Wells, like his namesake of our time, had big ideas and a gift of vision. He wanted to see regular express communication established with far-away California. It was tough going, but Mr. Wells did it eventually, largely, according to this film, through the courage, energy, and enterprise of a young man called Ramsay MacKay, whom, for convenience, we will call Joel McCrea. All this pioneering disrupted Mr. McCrea's private life, parting him from Frances Dee until their hair had turned to silver and the film had all but run its 115 minutes. I insist on one dogmatic objection: Mackay rhymes with sigh; never with say.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

The Toast of New York

(Rowland V. Lee—RKO Radio.)
Edward Arnold, Cary Grant, Frances Farmer, Jack Oakie.

The Toast of New York is the tale of Fisk. Edward Arnold, with his great gurgling laugh and his portly frame, plays the showman who outwitted the shrewd financier, Daniel Drew, and challenged the power of Cornelius Vanderbilt, both prominent characters in the picture. Fisk's life is great film stuff. Dressed in fancy uniform, he is driving a four-horse pedlar's wagon when the Civil War breaks out, along with two cronies, played by Cary Grant and Jack Oakie. He sees the chance of smuggling cotton from the South and he makes a fortune by it, only to find that after the war the dumb Oakie has invested the money in Confederate bonds. A big, riotous, merry film, with Frances Farmer as the beautiful actress for whom Fisk bought an opera house, and a first-class production by Radio.

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

Glorifying, I'm afraid, the American crook once more. Jim Fisk, "the big, red-blooded he-man" of the official synopsis of the picture, is as jolly and kindly as that admirable actor Edward Arnold can make him, but for all his ingenious go-getting he remains a fraud, and a prison sentence would have been a more just reward than a suicide's smiling exit. The title refers to Frances Farmer, so it is wholly justified.

—Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

W.F.N. Selection.

Stage Door	*	*
Popeye the Sailor Meets Ali Baba's Forty Thieves	*	*
It's Love I'm After	*	
The Hurricane	*	
True Confession	*	
South Riding	*	
The Toast of New York	*	
Underworld	*	

Other Films covered in this issue

The Great Garrick (Stars reserved)

Thoroughbreds Don't Cry (Stars reserved)

Perfect Specimen

Wells Fargo

The Divorce of Lady X

Smash and Grab

The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel

La Grande Illusion

Amphitryon

Late Mathias Pascal

The Divorce of Lady X

(Tim Whelan—London Films.)

Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, Binnie Barnes, Ralph Richardson, Morton Selten.

Lady X is a Technicolor re-make of Korda's old comedy, *Counsel's Opinion*, or *Who Was the Girl in the Royal Parks Hotel?* It is brittle, chatty, stuff, bright and competent enough, but superbly unimportant, and except for Mr. Richardson's ripe comedy performance as a huntin' and divorcin' peer, the interest is mainly in the haberdashery.

Technicolour, I find, makes one acutely clothes-conscious, and I can really tell you less about the stars' acting than about Miss Oberon's wardrobe and Mr. Olivier's slumberwear. I was specially intrigued by Mr. Olivier's line in shirts, which range from cornflower blue to palest acid drop. There is a particularly snappy number in light banana that I must remember to ask him about some time. It gives the face a faint phosphorescent colour, wan and gently limelit, and can be recommended to those who feel like nothing on earth in the morning when breakfasting with the unseasonably gay.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Falls between the two schools of sophisticated comedy and "roaring" farce. Merle Oberon irritatingly coy as a bed snatcher, and Laurence Olivier forced to clown for laughs. Ralph Richardson steals show with a gloriously inebriated scene. Pleasant break if on shopping expedition.

—Harris Deans, *The Sunday Graphic*

The Great Garrick

(James Whale—Warner Brothers.)
Brian Aherne, Olivia de Havilland, Edward Everett Horton.

Of the many legends about David Garrick, that almost legendary figure of the eighteenth century theatre, count as one of the most amusing *The Great Garrick*. Here is no ponderous biography, worshipful, solemnly paced, leaning heavily upon the encyclopaedia, but a jestful and romantic piece which has drawn its hero to the life while employing a gay fiction as its model. This might have happened, explains Ernest Vajda, its author, in the prologue. If it did, so much the better; if not, Garrick missed a joyous adventure.

Garrick has been more fortunate than most in his screen reincarnations. A few seasons ago, when England's *Peg of Old Drury* was chronicling his middle years, we had Sir Cedric Hardwicke to strut and sham and declaim as the very model of an ageing matinee idol. Now, as the camera takes still more of his years away, there is Brian Aherne to present Garrick as the young and handsome swashbuckler we rather hoped to find. A bravura actor, Mr. Aherne, with a flair for the dramatic handling of a cloak, an easy grace with his ruffles, a penchant for striding across a spellbound stage. We felt his kinship with the man he played, both probably having a deliciously slight trace of Smithfield in their blood.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

The story of this polite sketch is almost as fancy as the eighteenth-century clothes, and seemed to me as spontaneous as an Elsa Maxwell costume party, but there is a neatness and nice good humour which makes it agreeable. It's about the actor, of course, and how the staff of the Théatre Française once took him for a ride, and how he turned the tables on them. It is a little bit like one of those big, unwieldy practical jokes people work up, but it is brightly enough managed, and the joke isn't on us customers.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

"An easy grace with his ruffles . . ."

"Not Miss Lombard's fault . . ."

True Confession

(Wesley Ruggles—Paramount.)
Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, John Barrymore, Una Merkel.

I plead the justification of the title for admitting that I fail entirely to see by what charm or talent Mr. Fred MacMurray has deserved to be cast four times opposite Miss Carole Lombard. Dripping and champagne don't mix. This is another of the cycle of crazy comedies, built around Carole's captivating habit of telling "little white lies" and the consequences of her confessing to murder so that MacMurray, as her lawyer-husband, can win her sensational acquittal and make his fame as an advocate. Carole is a delight, and the film is studded with any number of hearty laughs. Una Merkel, John Barrymore, and Porter Hall help things along gaily.

—*The Jewish Chronicle*

Without exception this is the funniest film to come from America in 1937. The humour of the piece lies not in the plot but in the acting, and it is Miss Lombard's acting that makes this film. To fib wittily, charmingly, repeatedly and with conviction requires talent of no mean order. Miss Lombard contrives cleverly to show the fibs welling up in her spontaneously until they simply have to burst out. The scene where she defeats the hire-purchase man who has come for her typewriter by pretending that her husband is mad, she has lost her baby and her husband believes the typewriter is the vanished child, all in an elaborate story apparently made up on the spur of the moment, is one of the most brilliant individual performances I have seen for some time. If this film does not set half London laughing, it is certainly not Miss Lombard's fault.

—John Coverdale, *Time and Tide*

Critical Summary

Although "My Man Godfrey" is usually considered to be the film which gave birth to the present vogue for craziness, one is inclined to trace its origin farther back than that; no doubt the Marx Brothers are at the root of the matter. But the Marx Brothers remain a law unto themselves, even though so many have tried, with but little success, to follow in their footsteps—the Ritz Brothers, for example, come readily to mind. Still, the standard of craziness so far has been unexpectedly high, but one looks to the future with some misgivings.

Smash and Grab

(Tim Whelan—Jack Buchanan Production.)
Jack Buchanan, Elsie Randolph.

Jack Buchanan, in *Smash and Grab*, has made his best picture for five years. He plays a private detective employed by insurance companies to track down jewel robberies, aided by his glamorous and sporting wife, who is not averse, in the cause of justice, to do a little gentle vamping. Not a single song or dance intrudes into the story, and Jack, who never has to force his charm on you to cover up story blemishes, does a grand job of ingratiating ubiquity, partnered with immense assurance by Elsie Randolph. In fact, Tim Whelan, the director, has boldly followed in the footsteps of W. S. Van Dyke in building up a British *Thin Man* technique of snappy thrills and smart dialogue. What is more important is that he has, on the whole, succeeded.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

If Mr. Jack Buchanan is not careful he will find himself almost alone in the British film industry. Since he has turned producer he has made two good pictures in succession. His first, *The Sky's The Limit*, was full of bright ideas, and now he has made *Smash and Grab*, which is one of the brightest films, without being pretentious, that I have seen for a long time. It is a comedy thriller, and although Jack plays the lead, he neither sings nor dances, but confines himself to comedy. I like Buchanan's long legs and his slightly plaintive singing voice, and the best compliment I can pay him is to say that in *Smash and Grab* I missed neither. Instead I thoroughly enjoyed a continuity of bright dialogue, clever, naturally contrived "business," and one or two thrills that do not spoil the comedy by being too hair-raising. *Smash and Grab* is a fine example of what English studios can do if they try. The picture, I am certain, did not cost so much that it cannot earn a nice profit, yet it does not look cheap, because it was obviously thoroughly well thought out and prepared before production started.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Critical Summary

Only last month we were grumbling in these columns about the wretchedly poor material that had been given to Jack Buchanan in his English pictures—we still recall "Brewster's Millions" with a shudder. "Smash and Grab", therefore, has come as a most welcome surprise, and we readily agree with the many critics who hold it to be one of his best for several years. At the same time we do not for a moment suggest that he should give up his musicals altogether; in an age of torch-singers and mournful crooners it is refreshing to find someone who can sing a sentimental song sentimentally, but without a surfeit of treacle—personally we wouldn't exchange a Melville Gideon or a Jack Buchanan for a dozen Rudy Vallees.

Thoroughbreds Don't Cry

(Alfred E. Green—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Mickey Rooney, Ronald Sinclair, Sophie Tucker, C. Aubrey Smith.

You can't indict a nation, said Burke. Neither, legally, can you libel one. Otherwise, I feel, the whole British Empire would be entitled to sue Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and claim the most vindictive damages. The Wodehouse heroes, the monocled, dim-witted lords, the asinine butlers—these I can forgive as clean fun, though somewhat outmoded. But Hollywood's English schoolboy is frankly intolerable. Where, in heaven's name, does he come from? This ineffable sententiousness, these frightful platitudes, this unutterable priggishness—has somebody been studying current English boyhood in the pages of Dean Farrar, or what? The usual victim of this conspiracy (apart from the audience, of course) is poor little Freddie Bartholomew. In *Thoroughbreds Don't Cry* the victim is Ronald Sinclair, playing a fourteen-year-old sprig of the English nobility opposite the American tough guy of sixteen (Mickey Rooney). Really, this sort of thing won't do.

—George Campbell, *The Bystander*

Quite frankly this is one of the best and one of the most exciting films I have ever seen. Moreover, it does exactly what the film ought to do. It does not contain a single ounce of art, montage or other hokum. It has neither poise, urgency nor spatial rhythm. It is just a damned good yarn of the turf told with immense gusto and photographed in the lovely American sunlight. The story is preposterous, as goes without saying. I can only tell readers that I found this extraordinarily exciting. Indeed, if I could be sure of finding one film per month as good as this I should alter my entire attitude to the cinema. By the way, I am astonished that my colleagues should complain at the spoof English given to the English boy in this film. It is a legitimate return for some of the nonsense we pull about the American way of talking.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

Critical Summary

This department, which has always prided itself on being somewhat of an authority on racing, has yet never been able to comprehend the code of ethics under which racing in the States is carried out, or at least as it is carried out on the screen. We cannot recall having ever seen a race that has been fairly run, and dope, intimidation, bumping, boring and general interference are accepted as a matter of course; like the football pool lists, nothing is barred. Every American jockey appears to be crooked, and all of them look about sixteen, this being the age, we assume, at which they are let out of the local reform schools. Even a study of Damon Runyon cannot really prepare us for what we must expect in the cinema; Hot Horse Herbie, we feel, would be quite outclassed by these Hollywood thugs.

"Damned good yarn of the turf . . ."

The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel

(Hans Schwarz—London Films.)
Barry K. Barnes, Sophie Stewart, Francis Lister, Margaretta Scott, James Mason.

Pleasant as it is to renew acquaintance with Sir Percy Blakeney and his charming wife, the meeting is not altogether satisfactory. There is more than a suggestion in this film that Sir Percy is one of the new poor, and consequently Regency England is not as lavish as the previous adaptation of the hero's life showed it. In so essentially a romantic story the colours of popular fiction should not be allowed to fade and the background of the fashionable world should be boldly, even extravagantly, drawn, if the sense of the period is to be properly conveyed. Here the cricket match which opens the film and shows Blakeney at the wicket is not an aristocratic pastime carrying heavy wagers, but a mild curiosity. Even the Regency pavilion seems to have shrunk. Once out of England and into France, the *tempo* of the film is very properly accelerated, and intrigues, perils, and escapes flow continuously across the screen, but the film would have been stronger and even more exciting had the Pimpernel been less "demn'd elusive." —*The Times*

"Their demon bowler has no terrors for Percy . . ."

This latest chapter in the well-known sporting serial opens with Sir Percy Blakeney, prominent clubman and escapologist, playing in a cricket match at Brighton. "Their demon bowler has no terrors for Percy," cries one of his admirers; which would have been even more remarkable if the two balls dealt with by the Bradman of the Revolution had not both been slow full-tosses. On tour in France against Robespierre's Eleven, with a lot of women barrackers knitting on the Hill, Sir Percy has to face some nasty bodyline stuff on a bad wicket. Need I add that he carries his bat triumphantly, Robespierre is dismissed without addition to his score, and even Chauvelin learns to play the game with a straight bat, the cad.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Critical Summary

The present film lacks the subtlety and the fine atmosphere of suspense which characterised the work of Leslie Howard and Raymond Massey; and Sir Percy Blakeney, now no longer deceiving us with the manners of a lackadaisical fop, is a far less intriguing person than before. But had there been nothing with which to compare this picture we no doubt should have found it very passable entertainment.

Underworld

(Jean Renoir—French.)
Louis Jouvet, Jean Gabin, Suzy Prim, Jany Holt, Vladimir Sokoloff, Junie Astor.

In its translation to the screen, *The Lower Depths* shows a remarkable vitality, a singular ability to remain eloquent without the aid of dialogue. It would have succeeded as a silent film, which is a tribute, of course, to the essential humanity of Gorki; his figures live before they speak. Yet there is a grand thrust in some of the dialogue, a sharp point of savage wit. The theme, which is almost anything you like to read into it beyond the bare facts of wealth humbled and poverty exalted, is never wholly given over to what is sombre. The dosshouse crowd are as authentic as could be wished, the beating to death of Kostylev is done with swift and unerring realism—but one never feels that *Underworld* is a presentment of evil as bitter and haunting as was seen in *Broken Blossoms*. The end is in a streak of happiness, conventional enough for a novelette, though marked, again, by shrewd directiom.

Jean Gabin plays Pepel with a deadly calmness in the early scenes, letting warmth of disposition and a hankering for more than the life of crime emerge as stealthily as the sun from December clouds. And in Suzy Prim as Vassilissa he has a partner of excellent skill in the slow redemption of gloom. But Louis Jouvet's "Le Baron" is the outstanding accomplishment. He, raw-boned and glittering of eye, stalks with the same hint of heroic detachment through the dosshouse as through the gambling den of luxury; and like the Ancient Mariner, he would fasten our attention whether we willed it or not.

—*The Birmingham Mail*

Amphitryon

(Schunzel and Valentin—French.)
Henri Garat, Armand Bernard, Jeanne Boitel, Odette Florelle, Marguerite Moreno.

The legend of how Jupiter descending incognito upon a war-widowed Thebes, nearly tricked Amphitryon's wife into infidelity by assuming the absent General's shape, and how he was fooled, is so good a tale that it is no surprise to learn that there are 38 known versions of it for the theatre. And, indeed, what in essence was any *Palais Royale* farce but this? The treatment may be fairly likened to that of an operetta by Offenbach or Messager, minus the speed, the witty lines, and the genuinely gay music. The players are good, and could easily make much of even mediocre material, but the direction and timing are such that point after point goes for nothing, and we either watch a scene too long until it is tedious or are flicked away from it before the point has gone home. There are some tedious passages, but before the end the *tempo* quickens and the total effect is of jollity if not of dazzling wit. Florelle, best of soubrettes, warms up some rather tepid ditties enticingly; several handsome ladies parade about with grace, and the views of Theban life are droll in the *Bouffes-Parisiens* manner. Above all, there is Mme. Marguerite Moreno, as Juno, with a terrifying "Où est mon mari?" in every look and gesture, and she enlivens any situation in which she appears. But the same cannot be said of M. Henri Garat, whose performance in the dual part of god and man falls short of what might be expected of the hero of *Il est Charmant* and M. Armand Bernard, as a rheumatic Mercury in a Nellie Wallace hat, accomplishes little for so

"Jollity, not dazzling wit . . ."

genuine a comic. In all, this reduction of a good story to terms of musical comedy misses too many opportunities for wit and satire to be rated as more than a mildly amusing entertainment.

—*The Times*

Possibly as a concession to various censorship boards the film departs from the accepted story in that the conception of Hercules definitely does not take place. But this is made up for by the rather charming modernity of both gods and mortals, who burst into the metallic recitative of early musical comedy and despatch and receive prayers labelled "priority."

In any case, when Marguerite Moreno, as the outraged spouse of Zeus, is on the screen, all else is forgiven and forgotten; her grim determination to be the best-dressed woman on Olympus is worth all the jokes about infidelity, all the pretty *mädchens*, and all the sets that look like parts of the Nürnberg stadium, which make up the bulk of this curiously indeterminate piece of film-making.

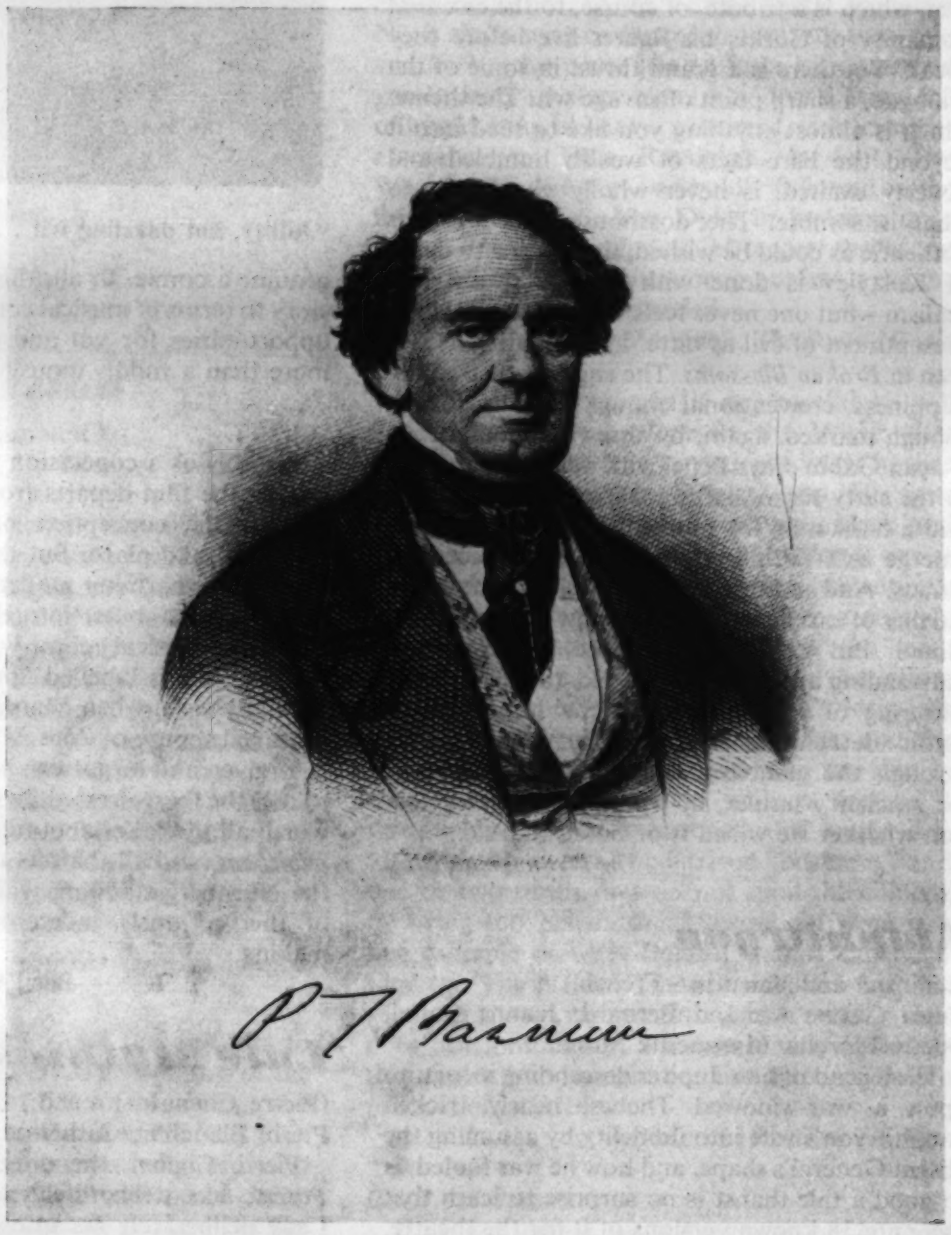
—Basil Wright, *The Spectator*

Late Mathias Pascal

(Pierre Chenal—French.)
Pierre Blanchar, Catherine Fonteney.

Pierre Chenal, the director of *Late Mathias Pascal*, has deliberately scattered his original. I say deliberately because M. Chenal, who also directed *Crime et Châtiment*, is beyond question an artist who knows what he is doing. His conscious desire in this case must have been to let air and sunlight into his story, to leave it somehow better-natured than it was. He has done so in the first place as any director might do it, by distributing intercalary scenes which show all the steps in the narrative as they are taken—the hero on a train, the hero lugging his suitcase through a park, and so on. But in the second place he has proceeded with subtlety to throw over the whole affair a very pleasant mantle of homely absurdity. His people, his story, and his manner of manipulating them are alike in that they seem in some attractive way old-fashioned, in some artful way awkward. He has taken down Pirandello's famous intensity several dozen pegs, but he has wanted to do this for the sake of another effect; and because, no doubt, he couldn't quite believe that Pirandello was as profound as he seemed. He has been at once critical and affectionate toward his material, moving in without apology and making himself charmingly at home among the episodes. The result is original and delightful beyond most films of France or of any other country.

—Mark Van Doren, *The Nation*



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Opening in March

Granada	Slough

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The MONTH'S RELEASES

THE two outstanding films for general release in February are **The Life of Emile Zola** and **They Won't Forget.** Miss these two films and you miss two of the cinema's greatest achievements.

For sheer holding-power and suspense **They Won't Forget** is unbeatable. Don't make the mistake of thinking that, because the critics have labelled the film great, it is dull; it is tip-top melodrama throughout. It is the story of the assault and murder of a business college girl student in a town in the Southern States of America and the gradual building up of prejudice and passion against a school teacher from the North who is tried and convicted for the murder. He is reprieved and lynched. Brilliant direction and acting make this one of the most enthralling pictures ever made. There are no top-liners in the cast, but the acting is uniformly fine, with Claude Rains at his best as the prosecuting District Attorney.

The Life of Emile Zola stands out for the fine performance of Paul Muni as Zola; for its historical accuracy and sincerity of treatment and for its dramatic vibrance. Sketching Emile Zola's early struggles and rise to fame, the film recounts the Dreyfus case and Zola's fight to free Dreyfus.

"*The Life of Emile Zola*"

Exciting and moving, and for all its traffic with the past, speaking a timely word for freedom, justice and truth.

Spectacular and starring Gary Cooper and George Raft, **Souls at Sea** is nevertheless disappointing in some respects. It began as the story of the sinking of the "William Brown," a packet lost at sea in 1841. With more passengers and crew than the boats could carry, one man took command and forming a three-man jury, himself, a negro and a seaman, sat in judgment over the others, deciding who was to be saved and who left to drown. For this he was put on trial. The makers of the film have added to this story, making the seaman an opponent of the slave traffic, and the boat a slaver. Savage slave trading scenes, the trial of the seamen, and a spectacular shipwreck, make it an exciting and entertaining picture, despite its shortcomings.

The comedies to be seen this month include the new Leslie Howard film **It's Love I'm After,** with Bette Davis and Olivia de Havilland. It is the story of an actor's attempt to cure a young girl of her infatuation for him by disillusioning her. The subsequent complications and the fooling of the indignant, protesting, Eric Blore, provide many laughs. **Double Wedding** is another piece of M.G.M. sophisticated slapstick, with Myrna Loy and William Powell. Just the film for those in search of laughter and a rest from over-profound thinking. **New Faces of 1937** has no outstanding stars but it has been highly praised by the critics for its humour and entertainment value.

Wanger's "Vogues of 1938"

Vogues of 1938 is of particular interest to women. It is not only a parade of the latest fashions, but has a story and some good variety. **Lovely to Look At** is Sonja Henie doing her stuff on ice, surrounded by a showy ballet. Miss Henie is breath-taking on ice but the ballet sequences drag. **The Firefly** is about Spain's resistance to Napoleon, with Jeanette MacDonald, as a secret agent, singing long and loud. Over long and with many dull patches, the film is a strong argument in favour of the five-day week. **Stella Dallas,** a remake of the 1925 success, is good for the handkerchief trade, with Barbara Stanwyck striving in vain to win the acting laurels once captured by Belle Bennett in the same rôle. Those who saw Miss Stanwyck in **The Plough and the Stars** will know what to expect.

Blonde Trouble is a remake of "June Moon", a play by Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman. Good entertainment, featuring some of Paramount's younger players, including Eleanore Whitney and Johnny Downs; some good music and some laughs.

Among the British films released are George Formby's **Keep Fit,** Jack Buchanan's **The Sky's the Limit,** and Arliss's **Dr. Syn.** The latter deals with smuggling, so much a part of our English coast-land tradition that it might have been a satisfying picture of English life instead of the naïve and unreal film it is.

"*Dr. Syn*"

The Life of Emile Zola (Warner Bros).
DIRECTOR: William Dieterle
STARRING: Paul Muni
Gale Sondergaard
Joseph Schildkraut
Vladimir Sokoloff
(Reviewed November and December *W.F.N.*)

They Won't Forget (Warner Bros.).
DIRECTOR: Mervyn LeRoy
STARRING: Claude Rains
Edward Norris
Gloria Dickson
(Reviewed October and December *W.F.N.*)

It's Love I'm After (Warner Bros.).
DIRECTOR: Archie L. Mayo
STARRING: Leslie Howard
Bette Davis
Olivia de Havilland

Double Wedding (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
DIRECTOR: Richard Thorpe
STARRING: William Powell
Myrna Loy
Florence Rice
John Beal
(Reviewed December *W.F.N.*)

Souls at Sea (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Henry Hathaway
STARRING: Gary Cooper
George Raft
Frances Dee
Olympe Bradna
(Reviewed October)

Stella Dallas (United Artists).
DIRECTOR: King Vidor
STARRING: Barbara Stanwyck
John Boles
Anne Shirley
(Reviewed December *W.F.N.*)

The Firefly (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).
DIRECTOR: Robert Z. Leonard
STARRING: Jeanette MacDonald
Allan Jones
Warren Williams

Walter Wanger's Vogues of 1938 (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Irving Cummings
STARRING: Warner Baxter
Joan Bennett
Helen Vinson
(Reviewed January *W.F.N.*)

Lovely to Look At (20th Century-Fox).
DIRECTOR: Sidney Lanfield
STARRING: Sonja Henie
Tyrone Power

New Faces of 1937 (Radio).
DIRECTOR: Leigh Jason
STARRING: Joe Penner
Parkyakarkus
Milton Berle
Harriet Hilliard

Wife Doctor and Nurse (20th Century-Fox).
DIRECTOR: Walter Lang
STARRING: Warner Baxter
Loretta Young
Virginia Bruce
(Reviewed January *W.F.N.*)

Keep Fit (A.T.P.).
DIRECTOR: Anthony Kimmins
STARRING: George Formby
Kay Walsh
Guy Middleton

Blonde Trouble (Paramount).
DIRECTOR: George Archainbaud
STARRING: Eleanore Whitney
Johnny Downs
Lynne Overman
Terry Walker

1

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4

5

1. History
2. Nature Study
3. Geography
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5. Agriculture

new GBI films 1938

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MANAGERS and MOVIEGOERS

The L.C.C.'s plan to prevent alteration of cinema seat prices at busy periods is widely supported by cinemagoers. Relations between Exhibitors and their patrons are discussed in this article.

It has probably occurred to everyone that it is high time that the people who make films and the people who see them should get together. The former claim that they have no way of telling what the public likes and that every film is a commercial gamble. The latter have a million individual complaints but no way of voicing them. As cinemagoers they have no rights at all, except the right of staying away.

The film industry has done its job pretty well and that is the reason why few major issues have arisen in this country between the cinema and the public. However, film news reveals this month a minor sensation. On the complaint of a patron the London County Council threatens to introduce regulations that will fix the price of seats. Alteration of seat prices according to the popularity of a film has been fairly common and it is a practice that has irritated the public. But it seems that the cinema people are not anxious to part with this right and are prepared to gamble on the docility of the public.

The suffering public is in fact completely at the mercy of the film industry until some method of organised protest is evolved. In the meantime the public has got so accustomed to its regular dose of dope that it is unable to exercise its one and only right—of staying away.

The film industry has tried very hard to reach the public mind, but, I am afraid, only for selfish reasons—to increase box-office returns. Their point of view is expressed frankly in a book *The Complete Kinemanager* (Kinematograph Publications Ltd.), by J. S. Hutchison, a circuit house manager.

Here is a quotation from a chapter headed "Contact with Patrons" in which Mr. Hutchison gives advice to managers:

"A question (to a patron) about the quality of the show is particularly dangerous if the manager has any reasons to assume that the programme is not good. He dare not risk a lie because every statement and advertisement for which he is responsible will be disbelieved by the patron who at any time discovers that a statement is untrue. It is always possible to frame some evasive answer such as 'The programme is going very well but it may not be your type'. It is reasonable to assume that a similar statement is not likely to lose a customer, as once a patron has gone so far as the pay-box, he is seldom discouraged from going inside. A useful general rule is never to say anything to an incoming patron that is likely to be challenged when you meet him coming out.

"The same reasoning applies to a departing patron who states that the show is rotten. . . Let us analyse the patron's mind when he comes out and sees the manager. He has disliked the show, he considers the evening wasted, and in the manager he sees an opportunity to air his grievances. Is it reasonable to assume that the manager may by argument cause the patron to change his mind? Surely an argument or negation of that statement is likely to infuriate the patron still more. Suppose for example that the manager argues that the films are very good, and that the patron is wrong, it does not seem possible that he will be convinced. He is much more likely to assume that if the current show is an example of what the manager thinks is a good show, then the kinema concerned, is one to be avoided. Again there is an opportunity here for an evasive answer."

An amusing passage concerns "Noise and Disturbance."

"Complaints are occasionally made about noise emanating from other patrons. This is a very delicate complaint to handle, and should be attended to by the manager personally. The danger is, that one may so easily offend the patron about whom the complaint is made, and it is not good business to satisfy one customer at the expense of another's good will. The usual procedure is to approach the offending parties with an apology for disturbing them. This may be followed by a brief reference to the complaint and an appeal for co-operation in satisfying a difficult customer. Most patrons react favourably to this method of approach. If it is not successful, a sterner admonition may be necessary."

THE film industry is inclined to treat "the audience" as a child—incalculable, irrational and undisciplined—and its efforts to amuse the child are not tempered with either sympathy or understanding.

Audience reaction remains an enigma. For no earthly reason one film makes money and another doesn't. Ballyhoo helps little, statistics don't help at all. One renting company I know keeps a gang of tame patrons and books films when their viewing reports agree. But often their combined opinion turns out be no guide whatever. Cinema managers with lifelong experience, will tell you that the thing is a matter of chance. Film companies have employed psychologists to study the subject and scouts are sent to sit with the audience and listen to chance remarks. No-one has yet learned the secret and the audience won't tell.

Why do we go to the movies? Let's be frank. Some of us, dull ones, go with mind alert, ready to criticise or commend, anxious to tell the lads at the office or the folk next door that we've been and we're up to date with the world. Some of us go out of habit, because it's a cheap way to spend an evening. Some of us go for warmth and comfort and a chance to sleep in peace. Some of us are tired and worried and want to live someone else's life for a little while.

Most of us though, pay our money at the box-office with a secret thrill in our hearts and a childlike hope in our eyes. We may hope for a miraculous revelation of the meaning of things; we may hope to feel more keenly, to laugh or cry or get excited; at worst we hope to be entertained.

Each of us is much like the youngster who has been promised a lollypop. We want it red, or maybe blue or green, but it must have an interesting flavour. And when we get it, we are slightly disappointed, but not enough to renounce lollypops for life.

In other words, when we go to the cinema we want to leave it with a little more happiness than when we entered, we want our ideals left intact and our emotions pleasantly titillated. The film people don't want to disappoint. So they strive to uphold our ideals: they give us glittering sets, to please our eyes; they tell us that things come out right in the long run, to make us happy and they throw in crime, illicit sex, misfortunes and heroics, to stimulate our emotions.

We are the dog. They try one combination on us and if it succeeds they repeat it with minor variations. When we get bored, they swing right over and give us another combination.

Most of us just sit back and let things ride. If we don't like it, we don't usually trouble to say so. In any case the magnificent upholstery and carpets, the stars on the ceiling, and the pained aloofness of the attendants frightens us too much. We sneak through the exit, maybe at the most, giving the commissionaire a dirty look.

But unless more of us appeal to the manager or unless we organise some more efficient way of making our minds known, there will continue to be films that bore and annoy us, seat prices will remain arbitrary and the film people will go on thinking we are morons.

Perhaps if the film-makers were to regard the public as a collection of individuals much like themselves; perhaps if they were even to treat us as adults, with self respect and an intelligent interest in adult affairs; perhaps if they were (as Mr. Hutchison suggests) to earn respect for the industry by reason of disinterested service to the public, and perhaps if they were to concentrate just a little less on exploitation, the problem of box-office appeal might not loom so large.

MARION FRASER

NEXT

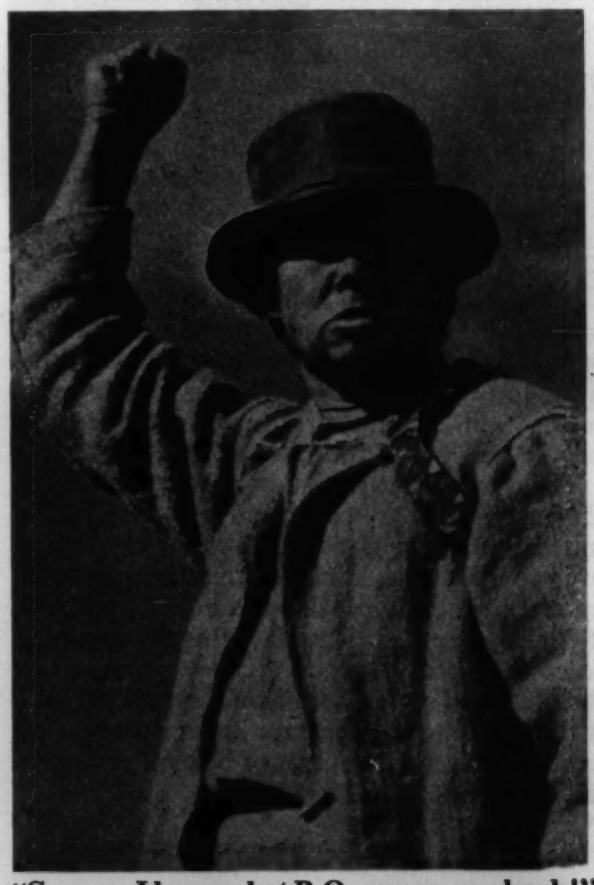
GENTLEMAN, PLEASE

Baldness is said to be the newest menace to the male stars of Hollywood. Several of them are wearing toupées in their pictures, and men's hairdressers now rank equal in importance to women's slimming experts.

O, it is rather diabolical
That fame depends upon the follicle,
For reputations everywhere
Are hanging by a single hair.
Each truant tendril in the comb
Means one more fan who stays at home;
Each application of restorer
Another gone-for-good adorer.
So long as you are good and hairy
You'll be a Clark, a Paul, a Gary,
But with a mere half-crowning glory,
Of course, it's quite another story.
You'll try, but you will try in vain—
What good is might, when you've no mane?
O, movie-star, when fully-thatched,
Full many a golden egg you've hatched;
But when the tresses leave the brow,
A box-office disaster thou.

Callous? Lets!

Little Elsie looked so sweet,
Patting horse in the street.
Her parents look quite nice in black—
A dray-horse patted Elsie back.



"Sure . . . I know what B.O. means, ya skunk!"

Bigger than Barnum's

—and probably funnier

World Film News' Gigantic Circus and Fun Fair has just completed an enormously successful season on a patch of waste ground in Wardour Street.

With its three rings in action simultaneously, its clever blending of new acts and all your old favourites, it has given pleasure to thousands, including many prominent British film personalities who came in to get out of the cold.

One of the most sensational acts was undoubtedly that of "La Belle Lejeune," whose clever knife-throwing was rapturously received by one and all. "The Great Alex," too, was heartily applauded for his Word-Swallowing act.

With the children, of course, the clowns were first favourites. These clever tumblers and knockabouts were recruited this year from the ranks of the film-critics and caused much merriment, constantly falling down for no good reason. Many showed themselves to be accomplished contortionists by continually patting themselves on the back.

Among the side-shows, Alf. Hitchcock, billed as "The Human Hairpin," was a popular attraction, while "The Four Financiers" mystified everyone by their clever juggling.

The troupe of Giraffe-Necked Women, kindly lent by the Censorship Office, caused a good deal of raucous laughter and one or two dirty cracks from the patrons.

"Aubrey and Ernie" proved themselves an amusing pair of cross-talk comedians. Speculation was rife among the audience as to the identity of "Britain's Only Yogi", reported to be a film magnate, who remained suspended in a horizontal position ten feet above the circus-ring for three weeks, without moving a muscle. He was afterwards thrown to the lions, but was thrown back.

Altogether the utmost good humour prevailed. Only one ugly scene occurred, when two well-known stars came to blows in the "Tunnel of Love." The helter-skelter was particularly popular, and the frantic squeals of investors as they felt themselves falling went on far into the night.

The organisers are anxious to trace the whereabouts of a number of performing seals, who disappeared from their dressing-rooms on the last night of the show. It is feared that they may have been persuaded to join the board of a certain film-company known to be in deep water.

DON'T BE A STAND-IN ALL YOUR LIFE—SIT DOWN ONCE IN A WHILE

SEA FEVER—

WITH COMPLIMENTS

The Royal Naval Film Corporation, an organisation to provide films for the major part of the sea-going Fleet, has just been inaugurated.

It is understood that ships of the Fleet will be given best-grade films at about the time of their general release in this country.

—News Item.

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a movie and a star to glorify,
And Miss Dietrich and Miss Colbert and the showgirls shaking,
And a theme-song and a wisecrack and a Technicolor dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the gangsters' ride
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is the Bowery and the bullets flying,
And the D.A. and the death-cell and Miss Temple crying.

I must down to the seas again, to the gay Long Island life,
To the boudoir and the bath-tub and of course the erring wife;
And all I ask is a seat on the aisle with a laughing fellow-rover,
And a Donald Duck and a newsreel when the big picture's over.

No, really, I couldn't take any money for that. It's as much Mr. Masefield's as it is mine. But we shall know now what to do with the drunken sailor, shan't we? We'll take him below and sober him up with a good back-stage musical. That'll teach him, the beast.

Ode to an Art Director

A Streatham bedroom with a Grecian pillar,
A cock-eyed arch to each suburban villa,
A pair of Woolworth's Mings—
These darn-fool things, remind me of you.

Those cosy lounges, built in easy stages,
Are copied from the front of Mr. Drage's,
And how each stair-case swings:
These crazy things, remind me of you.

How strange! How swell! if you could build—a set to shoot in, so
the walls could *not* waggle to and fro,
A lovely wrinkled photographic backing
whose edges show whenever we start tracking,
Oh, how the ghost of them clings!
These half-wit things, remind me of you.

W. F. E.

LORUM

Rodney Hobson

Pass the Custard-pies, Sir John

Sounds of a scuffle, a shout of "Oi" and the slamming of a door broke into the ten o'clock B.B.C. news summary last night.

The noise drowned the announcer's voice. Several people—a woman among them—were heard arguing. One of them said something to the effect, "I think it would be better to put him over there." —News Item.

As one from whom the B.B.C. have no secrets—my aunt empties the waste-paper-baskets for them—I am able to cast a little light upon the disturbance which set British listeners back on their rubber heels with such a rude shock.

Many listeners I know took the words "I think it would be better to put him over there," to refer to Sir John Reith. Actually they referred to a less illustrious, but equally mysterious figure, who has just recently been proving something of an embarrassment to the inmates of Broadcasting House.

The man was first seen some months ago, wandering around the corridors and humming to himself. The staff, however, were too well-bred to interrogate him until six weeks later, when he interrupted a gardening talk by shouting, "A garden is a lovesome thing, John Watt."

When questioned, the man gave his name as Joe Widgett and claimed that he was a fairy bricklayer with premises in Dancery Lane. Asked his business, he replied that he had come to lay the Foundations of Music.

While a bed was being made ready for him, Widgett was heard to say to an announcer, "Every time I lay a brick, it breaks into a million tiny pieces."

"And then what does it become?" asked the announcer, tears trembling on his long lashes.

"It becomes a darn nuisance after a time," replied Widgett, and the next moment he had disappeared, running hoppity-hop along the corridor in pursuit of one of the Aunts from the Children's Hour.

No steps have yet been taken to remove Widgett from Broadcasting House. He is now a familar figure to staff and artists alike, and has himself taken an impromptu part in many broadcasts. The mysterious voice that was heard in last Sunday's programme, exhorting a lady who was giving a harp solo to "go to town" is generally believed to have been Widgett's; while his brilliant and unrehearsed mouth-organ accompaniment to Saturday's news summary will live long in the memories of all who heard it.

This is how B.B.C. officials, the great big spoil-sports, explained the "Oi" incident:—

"We regret that owing to a technical error a studio was faded up earlier than intended, with the result that for a few minutes listeners heard some private conversation."

Another B.B.C. official added that the "private conversation" was between some people standing in a studio unaware that the microphone had been switched on in error.

They were not standing in the correct positions for broadcasting and the microphone distorted the noise of their movements. There had been no intruders, no scuffle and no horseplay.

There's a sign of the times for you . . . "no intruders, no scuffle and no horseplay." Why, in my young days at the B.B.C. when I was giving a series of talks on the Binomial Theorem in the Children's Hour, we were only too pleased to welcome intruders; scuffles in corners were a common occurrence, and as for horseplay, the Aunt who hadn't let her back hair down by tea-time was considered a dull dog indeed. I don't think any of us who were together in those good old roistering days will forget that midnight feast in Studio Two, when we got to the stage of drinking invalid port out of one of Brian Michie's sandals, before the police arrived and with mock solemnity frog-marched the whole lot of us to Marlborough Street.

Ah, those were the days, but now they are gone forever. Dammit, sir, you can't carry on like that when there are Arabs listening.

SAYINGS

"To decry films is to take an ostrich attitude."—*Speaker at the conference of the Incorporated Association of Headmasters.*

"Shucks, if I hadn't have talked so much with you, I'd have gotten through with my ice cream."—*Shirley Temple to Walter Wyndham.*

"Life is such a jumble. I want to settle down."—*Judy Garland.*

"Many actors never grow up and remain hopelessly infantile in their emotional reactions."—*The Director of Los Angeles Institute of Public Relations.*

"Japan's relations with foreign powers are growing in cordiality."—*The Emperor of Japan.*

"If she doesn't stop bothering me, I'll cease paying her alimony."—*Stan Laurel.*

"You may be thinking of me with loathing."—*Collie Knox.*

"Children must be taught that a cinema star is not the best authority on morals."—*Miss F. McCabe.*

"I have got a face like an elephant's behind."—*Charles Laughton.*

"Aw, c'mon Marlene, sock him."

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DONALD TAYLOR

★

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Animals Looking at You
Duchy of Cornwall
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WINTER 1937-38
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THE FILM QUARTERLY — FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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LIGHT-HEARTED VIKINGS
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TELEVISION TANGLE

by

George Audit

THE English have a reputation for muddling through. Well, how would you propose to muddle through this mess?

Television is costing the B.B.C. something over £200,000 a year. That only allows for two hours transmitting a day and fees that are mere tokens. You have to be *some* celebrity to get more than a guinea for a show.

There are only about 1,300 receivers in the country. A receiver costs about £60. The Radio Manufacturers' Association say they can't bring down the price until they sell more sets, and they can't sell more sets until the B.B.C. provide a programme service of three or four hours a night. And what with the new short-wave service in Spanish and Arabic and an expanding Empire service, the B.B.C. simply cannot find any more money from its existing revenue without seriously damaging home programmes. Already home economy is encouraging mediocrity in variety, music and features.

Why has the experimental television service failed to create a viewing public? The price of £60 knocked 75% of the population out of the market to begin with. Secondly, despite the P.M.G.'s statement at the opening of the E.M.I. transmissions that there would be no fundamental changes for two years or more, the public has the impression that the present television system will sooner or later be replaced by something better. And as the E.M.I. contract will run on until at least the end of this year the prospects for receiver sales during 1938 are decidedly foggy. Thirdly, there is no amateur constructing public associated with television as there was with radio in its early days. Between 1922 and 1927 there were hundreds of thousands of amateurs making sets for themselves and their friends because they could turn out an instrument as good as any manufacturer's, and it was not until we had the superhet and the tuning up of sets by expensive mechanical means that the amateur found himself at a disadvantage. Any similar activity in the television field is impossible because vital components are not generally available and the whole subject is extraordinarily difficult technically.

An E.M.I. Camera outside Alexandra Palace

Into this confusion Scophony have dropped a bombshell. At the last company meeting Oscar Deutsch announced that Scophony had now an entirely new system of transmission and reception. The system would project satisfactorily on to a 22 foot screen and home receivers were to be put on the market shortly by E. K. Cole (Verralls of Ekco is a Director of Scophony) for a price of about £15 or so.

Mr. F. Okolicsanyi, of the Scophony laboratories, has written an article in the *Wireless Engineer* entitled "Wave-Slot, an Optical Television System," which is the new Scophony system. It is significant that I tried to get several qualified B.B.C. engineers to interpret this article to me, but none of them was able to get the hang of it, as it presupposes a knowledge of advanced optics, and it was only by luck that I found a private engineer who could oblige. The Wave-Slot system uses supersonic waves as a new method of scanning. There is no expensive cathode ray tube. Acoustic waves are made visible in a liquid for which purpose two or more supersonic cells are used in various arrangements. Many advantages are claimed for this over cathode tube methods. It has automatic synchronisation of transmission and reception. The apparatus is simple, safe and easy to reproduce. The image is brilliant and capable of extensive projection. It may well be that Scophony have at last evolved a medium to rival the film.

Meanwhile other companies are trying to find a way of projecting a fair picture from the cathode tube. It is nearly a year since we pointed out here that the 10-inch by 8-inch screen in present use must be enlarged quite a lot before images will take on any appearance of reality and the general public will be attracted. At present the size of the cathode ray tube sets a limit to the size of the picture. It produces a picture on its base in fluorescent light which is so low in intensity that it cannot be amplified by optical means.

How will television develop? Analogies with radio and film are dangerous for this reason. Film, the indirect transmission of *pictures*, was a new experience and capable of universal application. Radio, the direct transmission of *sound*, was likewise new and easy to connect to the public. But the only new feature in television is the *direct* transmission of pictures. In hard times, with little financial backing and a complicated mechanism, television cannot expect to compete seriously with such mature and established media as broadcasting, the cinema and the press.

Radio developed in the home because it was cheap to connect, conveniently small in bulk, and because sound is purer in a small room than in a large hall. The film developed in halls for the very opposite reasons. If the industry can make a televisor for under £15 that gives a clear, large picture without a separate screen it may well replace ordinary radio in many a home. This tendency would be enormously accelerated if the B.B.C. would simultaneously televise some of their ordinary radio programmes. But if it follows this direction its technique will have little in common with that of the cinema. Any radio producer knows that a successful broadcast item will often appear ridiculous when seen in a film; which is the reason why politicians prefer to make their election appeals on the air. In the home, television might replace radio for almost every item.

On the other hand, there are definite prospects for public television. Deutsch of Scophony is talking of installing television projectors in all his Odeon cinemas. He would put on to his screens opera from Covent Garden, ballet, sports views and shots of places in the news. Similar developments are under way in Russia and Germany. Three-dimensional images have already been obtained experimentally but these could only be reproduced in a big hall and in darkness. But whatever form it takes, television in public halls must have quite a different technique from anything intended for home consumption.

My own impression is that television has no future as a separate and distinct medium in spite of the B.B.C.'s efforts to segregate it. It will be absorbed by the cinema and by broadcasting, separately, as an extension of existing mediums. Unfortunately, there are many obstacles in its way. The upper strata at the B.B.C. are on the whole uncertain in their policy towards television. The film industry is suspicious because television has been made a state monopoly under the control of the B.B.C. The radio industry is suspicious because they fear that Scophony are cornering the market. Still, if you go on sitting on the future too long it sometimes has a way of tumbling you over.

It pays to use

CINÉ-KODAK FILM

EXPOSURES cannot always be 100% accurate, but even where quite serious exposure errors are made, the finished films will not tell the tale if Ciné-Kodak Reversal Films (16 mm. and Eight) are used for black-and-white pictures.

In the course of processing by the reversal method (the cost of which, naturally, is included in the price of these films) *exposure mistakes are automatically compensated for* by means of a photo-electric control device, which is exclusive to the treatment of Ciné-Kodak film. Thus, even with considerable errors of exposure in either direction, you can be sure of pictures rich in tone and detail, and of a constant brightness on the screen.

Look at the accompanying illustrations. They are enlargements from two rolls of Ciné-Kodak Pan. Film, both of them over-exposed from *f*5.6 to *f*1.9, and under-exposed from *f*11 to *f*16—the correct stop being *f*8. The left strip shows you how you are "punished" for your errors by straight processing; the right strip shows how the Reversal Process "lets you off," giving you positives of an almost constant density whatever the vagaries of your exposures.

Another big advantage of Ciné-Kodak Reversal Films is their almost complete absence of graininess when projected. In the course of processing, the negative image, consisting of the larger grains, is bleached out, leaving only the minute unexposed grains to form the positive that you see on the screen. *This applies with equal force to the duplicates which by the same reversal process can be made from the original positive.*

CINÉ-KODAK FILMS (BLACK and WHITE)

CINÉ-KODAK PANCHROMATIC FILM (16 mm.) *The standard film for outdoor cinematography.*

CINÉ-KODAK SUPER SENSITIVE PANCHROMATIC FILM (16 mm.). *Its high speed makes it indispensable for artificial light work, and for work in weak daylight.*

CINÉ-KODAK 'EIGHT' PANCHROMATIC FILM. *A superfine-grain film, for the Ciné-Kodak Eight.*

CINÉ-KODAK PANCHROMATIC SOUND RECORDING FILM (16 mm.). *Perforated on one side only.*

ALL THE ABOVE ARE REVERSAL FILMS, SOLD AT PRICES WHICH INCLUDE PROCESSING AND RETURN POSTAGE.

★

For full particulars, write to Mr. W. F. Taylor, Dept. 57,

KODAK LIMITED · KODAK HOUSE · KINGSWAY · LONDON · W.C.2

TECHNICAL TIT-BITS

Bell & Howell are now producing four new standard models of their sound-on-film 16 mm. projectors, one Model 120, two Model 138s, and one Model 130. All embody many new features lending greater flexibility.

In new 750-watt Filmosound 120-G, there is an electric rewind, and for the teacher who wishes to emphasise and review, there is a still-picture clutch and a reverse gear. The clutch and reverse are useful for editing purposes. The machine has also two speeds, sound and silent. The take-up mechanism is designed to require no changing of belts to run reels of various sizes. This new model is also available with a special amplifier to operate on 25 to 60-cycle alternating current.

To the new Model 138-F have been added a reverse gear and a still-picture clutch.

The Filmosound 138-J is a two-case job, with its projector fully enclosed in a "blimp" case. The second case contains a twelve-inch speaker. The projector provides both clutch and reverse, and may be used for silent as well as sound films. This two-case Filmosound is particularly suitable wherever audience and projector occupy the same room. Special models of both the one-case and two-case 128s are available, operating on 25-cycle current and on 32-volt current.

The newest of the improved Filmosounds is the 130-D, the powerful 1,000-watt Auditorium model. A completely re-designed amplifier is the outstanding feature. With twin speakers the output is as high as 50 watts, but when only one speaker is used, a switch on the amplifier limits the maximum output to 30 watts, so that the single speaker cannot be overloaded. A new microphone input circuit permits the use of a crystal mike in the microphone jack without external matching transformers, and without interfering with the sound from the projected film.

The Filmosound 130-D is available in four combinations, one or two projectors with amplifier, and one or two speakers. When two projectors are used, there is no interruption in long programmes, for as one machine is switched off at the end of a reel, the other is automatically started. Twin speakers mean not only improved sound distribution in large auditoriums, but they also provide a system capable of handling the unusually high output of the new amplifier.

In addition, Bell & Howell have new splicing, rewinding and viewing equipment for 8 mm. film, and also a new film cement which can be used for both safety and standard film. This cement does not dissolve the dye in Kodachrome.

* * *

Travelling film units are confronted with the problem of cine lenses, since the projection throws differ up to anything from thirty to seventy feet, often two or more screens have to be carried, in which case it is necessary to carry numerous cine lenses to suit the various conditions. This is an expensive proposition, each lens costing around £10, or to hire about 10*s*. per week each.

But there is on the market a "Zoom" type lens which operates between 80 mm. and 130 mm. and by merely rotating the lens turret, the picture can be made to grow in size, and keep in focus during its travel, from a picture measuring about 4 ft. to 12 or 14 ft. according to the throw. This means that irrespective of the projection throw, the size of the picture is always the same. Full particulars and price (which is equivalent to the price of three single lenses) will be forwarded by *W.F.N.* on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

* * *

Finding a really lightweight converter for touring purposes has provided quite a problem for some time. Rotary converters are necessary for converting direct current into alternating current for the purpose of driving amplifiers and sound film projectors. They vary in weight according to their output in ampères so that a machine with an output of, for instance, seven ampères, weighs as a rule something like 2 cwt. and more, and represents as cumbersome an article as one would wish to handle.

I have called in various manufacturers from time to time and stressed the necessity of marketing a sensible machine for the purpose, but I am sorry to say nothing really effective has been done. Weight in itself is rather an essential factor when one considers the efficiency of such a machine; the more iron and copper used, the better the performance.

However, I think I have struck the best proposition to date—a converter manufactured by the Kandem Motor Co. Ltd. of Fulham, London. The converter made to my specification weighs slightly more than 1¼ cwt., works on an input voltage of 200 to 250 volts direct current with an output of 7½ amps. A.C. It is of the ball-bearing protected type, fitted with starting gear and A.C. volt meter, etc., and is priced at £21. 17*s*. 0*d*., representing, I believe, the cheapest on the market, yet equally comparable with other makes. Prices vary according to the size, and no doubt quotations would be given for your special requirements.

* * *

What is background noise?

It refers of course to the hiss noise heard in the background of sound films. Actually, background noise should be split for examination purposes, because there is (*a*) surface noise, and (*b*) grain noise, and the two should not be confused. Usually one finds that surface noise is predominant on variable width recordings, whilst grain noise is more apparent on variable density. The area of grain clusters can be calculated, and is a matter of much research by the leading manufacturers of film stock, because what happens is that the microscopic qualities of the emulsion and of the film base become audible as the higher frequency losses and as background noise.

The inhomogenites of surfaces, emulsion and film base noises are usually collectively termed "surface" noises, which are quite distinct from others. One will gather from this how the noise level is multiplied through the present day system of dubbing and re-recording, etc.

* * *

Pity the poor cinema operator. Up in his concrete enclosure he stands all day, living in the shadows from the glare of the arc lamps, breathing in their carbon fumes which are infused with the stick of nitrate film, listening to the unending clatter of his machine.

But not so to him, for all those conditions are to him, quite friendly. He would be nothing without them, ambling gently along through life, hoping for the best, expecting something to turn up sometime—but just what, he does not know. It is said—once an operator, always an operator, and operators never die—they only fade away.

Then all of a sudden the sound fails, dumb, mouths open wider in their endeavour to express themselves from the now silent screen, warning lights flash, the manager phones, an attendant dashes in—all with the same cry "the sound has failed!"

Somewhere in those amplifiers a valve has failed, or is it a condenser, a transformer, a choke or resistance? Perhaps a soldered connexion in one of the hundreds of wires has parted, maybe the trouble is in the loudspeakers, or one of a thousand probabilities. Meanwhile, whilst a service engineer dashes nearer in his car, the audience is getting impatient, they are clapping and now stamping, some are demanding their money back already. The scrumptious surroundings and thickly carpeted floor, the grand organ and the dress shirted managers, mean nothing now: all depends upon the operator, and this means one thing to him . . . the sack, for he is in the most precarious occupation there is, thousands of eyes watch his work all the time, he cannot rub out his mistake or troubles with a piece of rubber, it has been seen at once. And so often with the passing of a few hours he tramps his round again.

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FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

ASTLEY: Kinema	Feb. 3, 3 days
BARNARD CASTLE: Scala	Feb. 17, 3 days
BOWNESS: Hippodrome	Feb. 24, 3 days
BREDBURY: The Palace	Feb. 24, 3 days
BURNTISLAND: Cinema	Feb. 4, 3 days
DALTON BROOK: Palace	Feb. 9, 1 day
HINDERWELL: Cinema	Feb. 10, 3 days
INGLETON: Kinema	Feb. 10, 3 days
KNOTTINGLEY: Palace	Feb. 14, 3 days
LITHERLAND: Coliseum	Feb. 4, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Garrick	Feb. 24, 3 days
LLANGOLLEN: Dorothy	Feb. 17, 3 days
LONGRIDGE: Palace	Feb. 4, 3 days
PELAW: Grand	Feb. 21, 3 days
POYNTON: Cinema	Feb. 28, 3 days
SALCOMBE: Cinema	Feb. 24, 3 days
STOKESLEY: Lyric	Feb. 24, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Palace	Feb. 21, 3 days

Coal Face (Poetic treatment of coal mining).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
SOUND PRODUCTION: Alberto Cavalcanti.

ARMTHORPE: Scala	Feb. 17, 3 days
WHALLEY: Co-op	Feb. 7, 3 days

Colourful Cairo (Travelogue).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

CEFN: People's	Feb. 24, 3 days
HETTON: Imperial	Feb. 17, 3 days
NEWTON STEWART: Picture House	Feb. 7, 2 days
WALTON-ON-THAMES: Capitol	Feb. 26, 1 day
WESTERHOPE: Picture House	Feb. 17, 3 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw.

ABERDEEN: Topical News Theatre	Feb. 21, 6 days
ASPATRIA: Palace	Feb. 21, 3 days
BIRMINGHAM: Grand, Handsworth	Feb. 10, 3 days
BIRSTALL: Low Lane	Feb. 3, 3 days
BLACKHALL ROCK: Super	Feb. 13, 1 day
BUCKLEY: Palace	Feb. 21, 3 days
CAERGWRLE: Derby	Feb. 24, 3 days
EGREMONT: Castle	Feb. 7, 2 days
ELLESMERE: Town Hall	Feb. 28, 3 days
HAYDOCK: Picturedrome	Feb. 11, 2 days
HORDEN: Picture House	Feb. 13, 1 day
NORTH SEATON: Hippodrome	Feb. 28, 3 days
NORTON: Cinema	Feb. 10, 3 days
RENTON: Roxy	Feb. 9, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Queens	Feb. 7, 3 days
STOKESLEY: Lyric	Feb. 24, 3 days
WEXFORD: Palace	Feb. 7, 3 days
WHALLEY: Co-op	Feb. 7, 3 days

Hollywood To-day (Behind the scenes in Film City).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Rupert Grayson

BRADFORD: Victoria Pal, Girlington	Feb. 10, 3 days
HECKMONDWIKE: Palace	Feb. 7, 3 days
LONDON: News Theatre, Waterloo	Feb. 3, 3 days

Insect Oddities (A nature study).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey

HEREFORD: Odeon	Feb. 27, 4 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing X	Feb. 24, 3 days
Tatler, Charing Cross Rd.	Feb. 14, 7 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Feb. 6, 4 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

ALNWICK: Corn Exchange	Feb. 7, 3 days
ASTLEY: Kinema	Feb. 3, 3 days
BLAYDON: Plaza	Feb. 17, 3 days
BOOSBECK: Empire	Feb. 7, 3 days

EDUCATIONAL FILM PROGRAMMES

at the Tatler Theatre,
Charing Cross Road.

Saturday mornings, 12 noon to 1 o'clock.

Feb. 5th. **Emil and the Detectives.**
Tschierva Hut.

Feb. 12th. **The French "U."**
Le Dernier Milliardaire.

Saturday mornings, 11 a.m. to noon, and 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Feb. 19th. **Romantic India.**
Island of Contrasts.
Udaipur.
Wings over Everest

Feb. 26th. **Farming in Spring**
The Tawny Owl
Roots
The Sawfly
O'er Hill and Dale

CHESTER-LE-STREET: Empire	Feb. 28, 3 days
CURRAGH: Sandes	Feb. 3, 3 days
DUBLIN: Pillar	Feb. 6, 4 days
The Princess	Feb. 27, 7 days
DUNMANWAY: Broadway	Feb. 13, 1-2 days
EGREMONT: Castle	Feb. 21, 2 days
HETTON: Imperial	Feb. 21, 3 days
HINDERWELL: Cinema	Feb. 24, 3 days
ILFRACOMBE: New Cinema	Feb. 3, 3 days
KIPPAX: Alhambra	Feb. 10, 3 days
KIRKCUDBRIGHT: Picture House	Feb. 25, 2 days
KNOTTINGLEY: Palace	Feb. 17, 3 days
LANGLEY PARK: Hippodrome	Feb. 17, 3 days
LONDON: Cinema, Bloomsbury	Feb. 28, 3 days
MARPLE: Regent	Feb. 10, 3 days
MEADOWFIELD: Kinema	Feb. 24, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Brinksway	Feb. 25, 3 days
SWALLWELL: Cosy	Feb. 3, 2 days
WHALLEY: Co-op	Feb. 21, 3 days

Men Against the Sea (Documentary of North Sea trawling).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Vernon Sewell

BUCKIE: Palace	Feb. 24, 2 days
HEYWOOD: Picturedrome	Feb. 10, 3 days
NAIRN: Palace	Feb. 17, 3 days

Netherlands Old and New (Travelogue of Holland and the Island of Curacao).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey

ALLOA: La Scala	Feb. 10, 3 days
BELLSHILL: Picture Theatre	Feb. 14, 3 days
CHEPSTOW: Palace	Feb. 3, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Picture House	Feb. 24, 3 days
FALKIRK: Pavilion	Feb. 17, 3 days
HEREFORD: Odeon	Feb. 10, 3 days
KIRKCALDY: Rialto	Feb. 17, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing X	Feb. 21, 3 days
Monseigneur, Strand	Feb. 21, 3 days
Sphere, Tott. Court Road	Feb. 21, 3 days
Tatler, Charing Cross X	Feb. 7, 7 days
MANCHESTER: Scala, Withington	Feb. 24, 3 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House	Feb. 3, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt

ATHLONE: Savoy	Feb. 17, 3 days
BURNTISLAND: Cinema	Feb. 4, 2 days
BIRMINGHAM: Grand, Handsworth	Feb. 21, 3 days
KEGWORTH: Court	Feb. 3, 3 days
MARPLE: Regent	Feb. 3, 3 days
PENISTONE: Town Hall	Feb. 10, 3 days
SILVERTOWN: Albert Hall	Feb. 7, 3 days
STONE: Picture House	Feb. 14, 3 days
WHITTLE-LE-WOODS: Palace	Feb. 3, 3 days

Overland Express (German travelogue).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges Productions

HEREFORD: Odeon	Feb. 6, 4 days
MANCHESTER: Scala, Withington	Feb. 3, 3 days
SCARBOROUGH: Londsborough	Feb. 13, 1 day

People in the Parks.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford
Donald Alexander

KNUTSFORD: Picture House	Feb. 17, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Grove, Hazelgrove	Feb. 10, 3 days
NORTH SEATON: Hippodrome	Feb. 28, 3 days
SALCOMBE: Cinema	Feb. 21, 3 days
SEATON DELAVAL: Queens	Feb. 24, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Manor	Feb. 17, 3 days

Plane Sailing (The ins and outs of gliding).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Bosworth Goldman

BOURNEMOUTH: Premier	Feb. 21, 6 days
DRIFFIELD: Majestic	Feb. 10, 3 days
HOWDEN: Majestic	Feb. 17, 3 days
LONDON: Town Hall, Battersea	Feb. 3, 1 day
PICKERING: Majestic	Feb. 7, 3 days
POCKLINGTON: Majestic	Feb. 14, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Don	Feb. 3, 3 days
SUTTON COALFIELD: Odeon	Feb. 7, 6 days

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Shorts (*Contd.*)

Secrets of the Stars (Spotlight on British stages and studios).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Argyle British Productions Ltd.

ALLOA: La Scala	Feb. 3, 3 days
BARNSLEY: Empire	Feb. 14, 6 days
BRADFORD: Victoria Pal, Girlington	Feb. 3, 3 days
BOOTLE: Broadway	Feb. 21, 3 days
HALIFAX: Picture House	Feb. 7, 6 days
HECKMONDWIKE: Palace	Feb. 10, 3 days
LONDON: Cinema, Hokton	Feb. 7, 7 days
Eros News, Piccadilly	Feb. 14, 3 days
News Theatre, Victoria	Feb. 7, 3 days
News Theatre, Waterloo	Feb. 21, 3 days
NEWTOWN: Regent	Feb. 28, 3 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	Feb. 17, 3 days
RAVENSTHORPE: Pavilion	Feb. 21, 3 days
RUNCORN: Empress	Feb. 10, 3 days
SCARBOROUGH: Capital	Feb. 6, 4 days
SOUTHPORT: Palace	Feb. 13, 7 days
WAKEFIELD: Empire	Feb. 14, 6 days
WARRINGTON: Odeon	Feb. 14, 6 days
YORK: St. Georges	Feb. 7, 6 days

Six-Thirty Collection (Documentary of the West End sorting office).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey, Harry Watt

SOUTHPORT: Queens	Feb. 28, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Palace	Feb. 24, 3 days

Snow Water (Water power in the Swiss mountains).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: H. Dreyer

ILKLEY: Grove	Feb. 21, 6 days
PRESTON: Rialto	Feb. 9, 4 days

Southward Ho! (A journey across Franz-Josef glacier).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges

BIRKENHEAD: Super	Feb. 21, 6 days
BOLTON: Odeon	Feb. 7, 6 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Feb. 17, 3 days
HAMILTON: La Scala	Feb. 3, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont Pal, Anfield	Feb. 3, 3 days
Rivoli	Feb. 10, 3 days
LONDON: Tatler, Charing Cross Rd.	Feb. 28, 7 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House	Feb. 17, 3 days
SOUTHEND: Kursaal	Feb. 28, 3 days
STAFFORD: Odeon	Feb. 7, 6 days
WEYMOUTH: Bellvue	Feb. 24, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema	Feb. 24, 3 days

Sunny Tessin (Survey of the Canton Tessin, Southern Switzerland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph

BIRMINGHAM: West End	Feb. 24, 7 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Feb. 14, 6 days
HANLEY: Regent	Feb. 14, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	Feb. 7, 6 days
MIDDLESBROUGH: Gaumont Palace	Feb. 14, 6 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Feb. 28, 6 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	Feb. 14, 6 days
PETERBOROUGH: Broadway	Feb. 7, 6 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Feb. 3, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium	Feb. 14, 6 days
WEST HARTLEPOOL: Picture House	Feb. 21, 6 days

This Other Eden (A trip down the river Eden, in Westmorland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

BRADFORD: Victoria Pal, Girlington	Feb. 21, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Strand	Feb. 28, 3 days
World News, Praed St.	Feb. 14, 3 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: News Theatre	Feb. 28, 6 days
ST. LEONARDS: Kinema	Feb. 28, 6 days
SOUTHEND: Kursaal	Feb. 14, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Palace	Feb. 27, 7 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson

BELFAST: Apollo	Feb. 9, 1 day
MEADOWFIELD: Kinema	Feb. 10, 3 days

Town and Gown (Buildings, scenery and life of Oxford and Cambridge).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Peter Collin

DARLINGTON: Alhambra	Feb. 28, 3 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Feb. 28, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	Feb. 28, 3 days
MORECAMBE: Tower	Feb. 20, 4 days
PRESTON: New Victoria	Feb. 1, 5 days
STROUD: Gaumont Palace	Feb. 24, 3 days

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes

AIRDALE: Empire	Feb. 14, 3 days
BAKEWELL: Picture House	Feb. 3, 3 days
BARNSLEY: Empire	Feb. 10, 3 days
BREDBURY: Palace	Feb. 24, 3 days
KNUTSFORD: Picture House	Feb. 17, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed St.	Feb. 7, 3 days
LONGRIDGE: Palace	Feb. 10, 3 days
MARKET HARBOROUGH: Oriental	Feb. 7, 3 days
NEWPORT, I.O.W.: Odeon	Feb. 28, 6 days
NEWTON HEATH: Pavilion	Feb. 10, 3 days
POYNTON: Cinema	Feb. 28, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Greystone	Feb. 24, 3 days

Wheel and Woe (The evolution of the motor-car).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Liberty
DIRECTION: W. G. Duncalf

ARBROATH: Olympia	Feb. 24, 3 days
BARNSLEY: Empire	Feb. 21, 6 days
CREWE: Odeon	Feb. 14, 6 days
DARLINGTON: Alhambra	Feb. 3, 3 days
DUNOON: Picture House	Feb. 14, 3 days
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Feb. 7, 3 days
GLASGOW: Orient	Feb. 3, 3 days
GOOL: Cinema Palace	Feb. 21, 3 days
HULL: Playhouse	Feb. 21, 3 days
ILKLEY: Grove	Feb. 7, 6 days
LONDON: News Theatre, Waterloo	Feb. 24, 3 days
World News, Praed Street	Feb. 10, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Corona, West Gorton	Feb. 14, 3 days
MOTHERWELL: Pavilion	Feb. 3, 3 days
PAISLEY: Alex	Feb. 10, 3 days
SOWERBY BRIDGE: Electric	Feb. 3, 3 days
WARRINGTON: Odeon	Feb. 7, 6 days
WISHAW: Cinema	Feb. 3, 3 days

Foreign Films

Der Ammenkoenig (German).
DIRECTION: Hans Steinhoff
DISTRIBUTION: Tobis
OXFORD: Scala — Feb. 7, 6 days

La Belle Equipe (French).
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Jean Gabin, Charles Vanel, Marcel Geniat
LONDON: Berkeley — Feb. 1, indefinitely

Un Carnet de Bal (Winner of the Mussolini Cup—French).
DIRECTION: Julien Duvivier
STARRING: Françoise Rosay, Harry Baur, Pierre Blanchar, Fernandel, Raimu, Robert Lynen
LONDON: Studio One — Feb. 1, indefinitely

Chapaiev (Russian).
PRODUCTION: Leningrad Film Factory
DIRECTION: S. and G. Vassiliev
LONDON: Forum — Feb. 6, indefinitely

Ernte (Austrian).
DIRECTION: Geza von Bolvary
STARRING: Paula Wessely
OXFORD: Scala — Feb. 21, 6 days

La Grande Illusion (French).
PRODUCTION: Réalisation d'Art Cinématographique
DIRECTION: Jean Renoir
STARRING: Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Dita Parlo
LONDON: Academy — Feb. 1, indefinitely

Gribouille (French).
PRODUCTION: Laeur & Co., Paris
DIRECTION: Marc Allégret
STARRING: Raimu, Michèle Morgan
LONDON: Curzon — Feb. 1, indefinitely

Hortobagy (Hungarian).
DIRECTION: Georg Hollering
LONDON: Academy — Following *La Grande Illusion*

La Kermesse Héroïque (French).
DIRECTION: Jaques Feyder
STARRING: Françoise Rosay, Jean Murat
LONDON: Forum — Feb. 1, 5 days
OXFORD: Scala — Feb. 14, 6 days

La Mort du Cygne (French).
PRODUCTION: Les Films Osso
DIRECTION: Jean Benoit-Levy
STARRING: Jean Perier, Mady Berry, The Corps de Ballet from the Paris Opera House
LONDON: Curzon — Following *Gribouille*

The Oyster Princess (German).
PRODUCTION: Algassa Films, Berlin
DIRECTION: E. W. Emo
STARRING: Gusti Wolf, Theo Lingen
LONDON: Berkeley — Following *La Belle Equipe*

Schloss in Flandern (German).
DIRECTION: Geza von Bolvary
DISTRIBUTION: Tobis
OXFORD: Scala — Feb. 28, 6 days

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FILM SOCIETIES AND CLUBS

THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY (Kinematograph Section): Hon. Secretary, R. Howard Cricks, F.R.P.S., 35 Russell Square, W.C.1.

The Kinematograph Section has arranged for February a meeting of interest to workers in all branches of photography and kinematography. On Friday the 25th, Mr. A. E. Amor, F.R.P.S., is to give a paper on the manufacture of motion-picture film stock; Mr. Amor is a prominent member of the technical staff at the Kodak works at Harrow, and his information will therefore be first-hand and comprehensive.

The meeting opens as usual at 7 p.m. with the projection of sub-standard films. Non-members may obtain admission by invitation of a member, or by ticket obtainable from the Joint Secretaries.

The list of distinctions conferred by the Royal on its promiment members at the recent elections includes a number of names well known in film circles. Mr. Amor himself is among the newly-elected Fellows, while prominent among the Associates are H. M. Bond, Alfred Brown, Harold Chevalier, Leslie Rowson and J. H. D. Ridley.

EDINBURGH FILM GUILD: Hon. Secretary, Douglas A. Donald, Esq., 16 Great King Street, Edinburgh, 3.

In an endeavour to encourage substandard cinematography along constructive lines, the Guild, in co-operation with the Educational Film Association of Scotland, the Waverley Amateur Cine Society of Edinburgh, the Scottish Churches Film Guild and the Edinburgh Photographic Society, is organising an Amateur Film Festival to be held next November when prizes will be offered for films in four classes:

(*a*) A film of Edinburgh.
(*b*) Documentary, including industrial, civic and social services, publicity, travel, information and general interest.
(*c*) A colour film.
(*d*) Films for Church purposes including welfare, missionary or Biblical subjects.

While the entries in the classes (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*) are open only to residents in the Lothians, Peeblesshire and Edinburgh the film of Edinburgh is open to anyone and this Festival should provide a fine opportunity for amateurs all over the country, who may be visiting Edinburgh this summer, to turn their cameras on the town and see their films accorded the dignity of public showing in the Edinburgh Film Festival, with a chance of winning a trophy and prize.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, R. Cordwell, Esq., 13 Milwain Drive, Heaton Chapel, Stockport.

On December 19th the following films were shown to the Society: *Den Haag*, *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, *Modern Orphans of the Storm*, and *We from Kronstadt*. A retiring collection on behalf of the National Joint Council for Spanish Relief realised £18 10*s*. On January 18th Mr. Stuart Legg spoke on "The Future of British Films", at a meeting arranged jointly with the Manchester and District Film Institute Society. On January 20th, at the Rivoli Cinema, the programme included *Children at School*, *Soap Bubbles* and *Musik im Blut*.

On February 20th the feature will be *La Kermesse Hêroïque*. Other shows will take place on March 20th and April 10th.

WEST ESSEX FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, L. G. Watson, Esq., 10 Meadway, Buckhurst Hill. Studio: 41a Kempton Road, East Ham, E.6.

At recent technical meetings addresses have been given on the subjects of Set Construction and Make-up.

Power Without Glory, a film made by the Chairman, Mr. A. L. Watson, was projected at a recent meeting, and further progress has been made in the shooting of Mr. S. Reed's film, *Pot of Basil*.

Whilst membership must necessarily be limited, there are one or two vacancies in the Society. Applications should be addressed to the Secretary.

THE GUILD OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS' FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Margaret M. Kerr, M.A., 53 Drumby Crescent, Clarkston, Glasgow.

At the last meeting on December 9th, the discussion on "Censorship" was continued, and plans are gradually taking form for the classification of general films, according to their suitability for children. It is intended that, with this classification, teachers of the Guild will be in a position to guide children and advise their parents in the matter of choosing programmes which will have a good influence on the minds of the young. The need for such selection is very evident when one views the number of children who visit the cinema, and the titles of some of the programmes which are presented.

At a meeting held on January 20th three Kodachrome films were shown in addition to the usual programme. These depict native life and missionary work in Africa, and have come direct to the Society from Uganda, where they were taken by a friend.

AVANTE-GARDE LECTURES

Among the February lectures at the Reimann School and Studios, 4–10 Regency Street, London, S.W.1., is "Film-Making Single-handed", by Alex Strasser, F.R.P.S., to be given at 8 p.m. on February 11th.

Mr. Strasser, expert in documentary film-making and author of several film books, will discuss the work of the "avant-garde", and the possibilities of amateur film-work. Several films will be shown during the lecture. Admission 1*s*. 6*d*. (students 1*s*.).

* * *

On January 30th Jean Langlois, founder and organiser of the Cinémathèque Française, lectured at the Forum Cinema on the development of the film. The lecture was in French, with an English summary given at intervals.

Mr. Langlois maintained that contemporary cinematic valuation and criticism is distorted by social and economic atmosphere, and that the emphasis of a film shifts with the changing reactions of new audiences. Most film successes are lucky breaks. *Caligari*, shot with no great aim in view, became a classic. Only the works of Méliès, Griffith and Chaplin are faultless.

The talk was illustrated by reels from films by The German Expressionists, Pabst, Pina Menchelli, Sjostrom, Stiller, Griffith, Méliès, Wiene, Clair, Murnau and Vigo.

OXFORD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, E. F. Bowtell, Esq., 105 Victoria Road, Oxford.

The following are the details of the Society's Hilary term meetings: Sunday, February 6th, *The New Gulliver*, supported by *N. or N.W.* (Len Lye) and an early Chaplin comedy. Sunday, February 20th, the famous Greek legend *Amphitryon* and *Underground Farmers*.

NAT. TRUST COMPETITION

The attention of the Amateurs is drawn to a change in the closing date of the National Trust Film Competition announced in the December W.F.N. The closing date is now October 1st, 1938.

For those who did not see the early announcement we are repeating the competition rules.

No two prizes in respect of films of the same property or group of properties will be awarded, and the Trust reserves to itself the copyright of any winning exhibit.

The films should run for not less than 10 minutes, and coloured films are eligible to compete.

Preference will be given to films dealing with several rather than with one property.

The films must be on 16 mm films.

The prizes will be :—

1st	£20
2nd	£15
3rd	£5

The closing date is October 1st, 1938.

The prize-winning films will be used in connection with lectures, etc., to further the work of the National Trust, and will be titled as having won a prize in the National Trust Competition 1938 with the name of the winner.

Originals shall become the absolute property of the Trust, but the maker shall be entitled to copies of the film at cost price if he so wishes.

For further information refer to the December W.F.N. or write to : The Competition Secretary, The National Trust, 7 Buckingham Palace Gardens, London, S.W.1.

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Model 138J is a two-case model—one case contains the projector which is operated without removing, and the other case contains the speaker. New soundhead for the reproducer, incorporating a rotating sound drum, flywheel and a floating idler. Voltages on exciter lamp and photocell balance automatically as volume control is changed. Amplifier tubes of new metal type. Among special features worthy of note are reverse and "still" picture device, motor rewind and reel arm which can be attached quickly with single screw. The projector finish is grey damaskene, while the carrying cases are covered grey fabricoid to match. Model 138J, with 750 watt lamp, two film speeds (for either sound or silent film) Price £146

Model 138F has the same features but is a single case model which also accommodates 1,600 ft. reel of film. In use the combined projector and amplifier unit is removed, and the cover serves as baffle for self-contained loud speaker.
Price £138

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The Empire Film Library was inaugurated by H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester in 1935. Film productions of the late Empire Marketing Board and G.P.O. Film Unit are available in this Library for loan to schools and for approved displays by adult societies.

Recent additions include a number of 16 mm sound-on-film subjects dealing with scenery and wild game in the Empire.

For Catalogue (price 3d.) and forms of application for films, apply to:

The Secretary, EMPIRE FILM LIBRARY, IMPERIAL INSTITUTE, LONDON, S.W.7

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